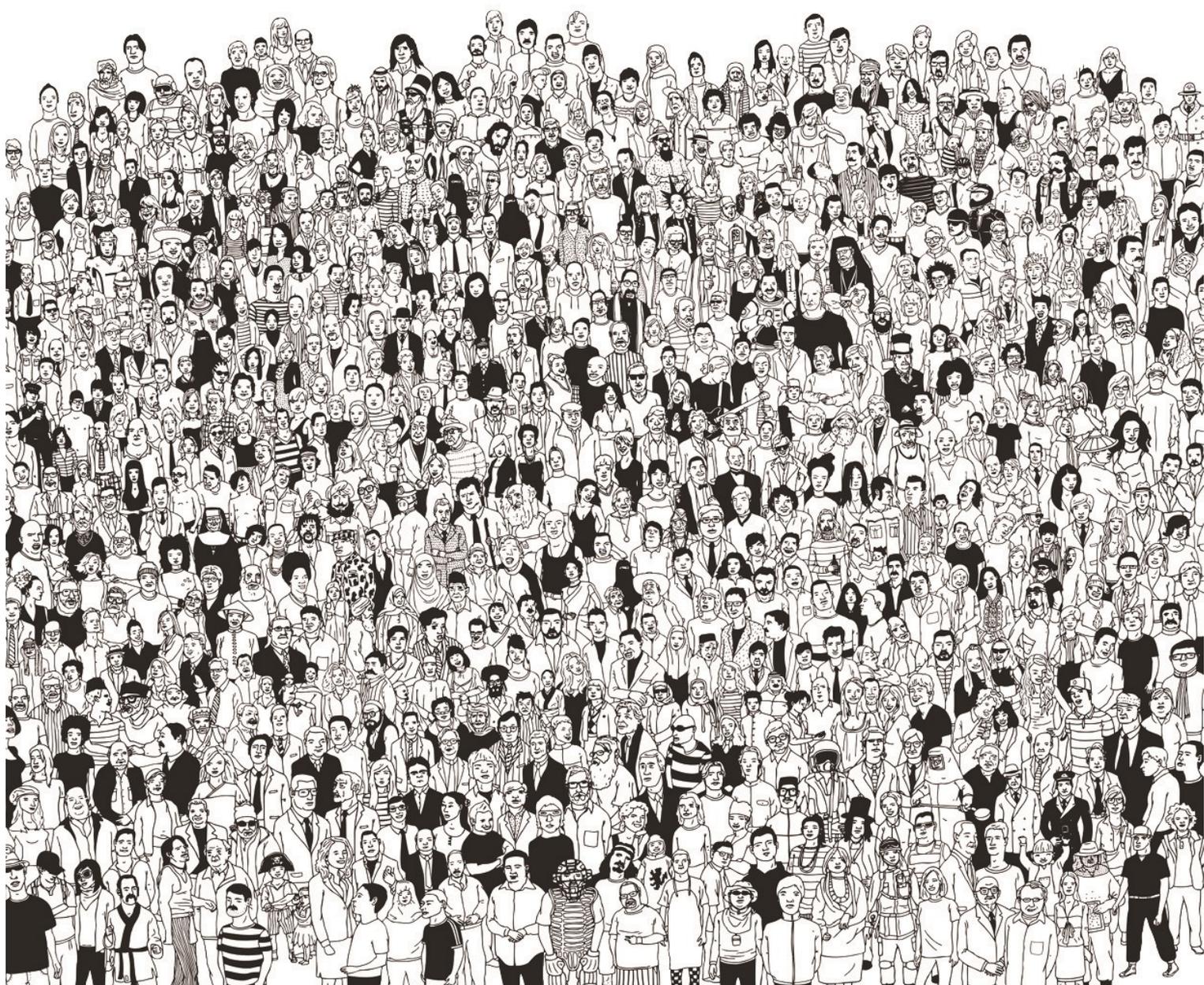


# Perceptions of A Levels, GCSEs and Other Qualifications in England – Wave 13

An Ofqual commissioned report

June 2015  
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## Executive summary

### 1 Introduction

1.1.1 This report presents the findings of the 13th wave of the Perceptions Survey.

1.1.2 The research was commissioned by Ofqual and conducted by YouGov. The aim of this research project was to investigate Heads of schools', teachers', students', parents', the general public's, employers' and HEIs' perceptions and levels of confidence in qualifications and the examination system as well as awareness, and ratings of Ofqual.

1.1.3 The survey follows the approach adopted in wave 12 and has been conducted using an online methodology. The fieldwork was conducted between the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2015 and 27<sup>th</sup> February 2015. The final achieved sample for each of the target groups was as follows:

- 241 headteachers;
- 704 teachers of GCSE, A level and other academic and vocational qualifications offered to 15 to 19 year olds;
- 324 young people, which are defined as those aged 15 to 19 who are studying/have studied/will study A levels and/or GCSEs and/or an academic qualification defined as the Level 1/Level 2 certificates (commonly known as IGCSE and referred to as this throughout the report), the International Baccalaureate, BTECs (Level 1/ Level 2 or level 3), the Pre-U and Freestanding Maths and other academic qualifications (including vocational and applied);
- 353 parents/carers of students who are taking or who have just taken A levels, GCSEs and/or other academic qualifications (including vocational and applied);
- 291 academic professionals<sup>1</sup> who had knowledge about the process of offering applicants a place on an undergraduate course at their institution;
- 274 senior/middle managers who work for an organisation that has recruited young people (aged 16-25) in the past 12 months;
- 1,005 members of the public;

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<sup>1</sup> This sample consisted of academics and a small number of admission staff. Please see the technical appendix for a description of the sample profile

- 1.1.4 The final achieved samples are structured to be representative of the relevant target populations. However, while the sampling approach has aimed to identify groups of participants that are representative, given that a survey of this kind only captures the views of those involved, throughout this report responses attributed to groups (for example, teachers, parents etc.) reflect only those respondents included in the study.
- 1.1.5 Where relevant and deemed robust, comparisons have been made between previous waves of the survey. Between wave 12 and this wave (13) there have been considerable changes to how the questions have been structured. This means that while the themes covered are similar, it is not possible to make direct comparisons between data points from wave 12 to wave 13.

## **2 Perceptions of GCSEs**

### **Level of trust in the GCSE qualification was high among respondents but remains lower than that seen for the A level qualification**

2.1.1 A majority of all groups agreed that GCSEs are a trusted qualification. Nearly two in three headteachers (64 per cent) agreed that GCSEs are a trusted qualification, compared with roughly the same proportion of parents, Higher Education institutions and young people (65 per cent, 66 per cent and 67 per cent respectively). Teachers were slightly less likely than parents, HEIs and young people to feel that GCSEs are trusted, with 57 per cent in agreement. Further, similar levels of agreement regarding the trustworthiness of GCSEs were displayed by the general public and employers (58 per cent and 56 per cent respectively), who could arguably be considered to have a slightly more removed perspective of GCSE qualifications.

2.1.2 These findings that GCSEs are well understood and a trusted qualification echo the findings of previous waves of the perception survey. In wave 12 it was identified that GCSEs being well understood and being seen as a trusted qualification were key strengths of the qualification. This sentiment has continued into this research, although levels of trust in the GCSE qualification continue to lag behind those seen for the A level qualification.

### **Concerns remain from some of those working within the education system over standards and accuracy - leading some respondents to feel less confident in the GCSE system than they did last year**

2.1.3 Headteachers and teachers were least likely to believe that GCSE standards are maintained year on year, with 54 per cent of headteachers and 43 per cent of teachers stating their disagreement with the statement. Both groups were much less likely to agree that standards are maintained (29 per cent and 32 per cent, respectively).

2.1.4 When asked on a similar topic to consider whether or not they believe the accuracy of the marking of GCSEs has deteriorated in the last year, teachers (34 per cent) and headteachers (52 per cent) were once again most likely to agree that this is the case.

2.1.5 Still thinking of the marking of GCSEs, headteachers and teachers distinguished themselves from the other groups in their disagreement with the statement that the marking is accurate. Three-in-five headteachers (59 per cent) as well as one third (34 per cent) of teachers disagreed. These findings mirror data from the previous wave 12 of the Perceptions Survey that found that headteachers reported the lowest levels of confidence in the accuracy of the marking of GCSEs.

2.1.6 On trend with teachers' and headteachers' disbelief that GCSE standards are maintained year on year, they were more likely than the other groups to state that compared with last year they are less confident in the GCSE system. Headteachers were particularly likely to feel this way, with a majority (58 per cent) stating their agreement. Among teachers, 43 per cent agreed that they are less confident in the GCSE system than last year.

**Consistent with the previous year, the majority of school professionals, young people and parents agree that there is too much change in the GCSE system, with headteachers and teachers strongest in their views**

2.1.7 When asked to state their opinion on whether or not there is too much change in the GCSE system, teachers and headteachers stood out against the others, being much more likely to agree that there is too much change (74 per cent and 86 per cent, respectively). Young people and parents expressed very similar opinions on the topic, with a slight majority in both cases agreeing that there is too much change in the system (58 per cent and 57 per cent respectively).

2.1.8 These findings show that concerns over the amount of change in the qualification system remain high. In wave 12 of this research "constant change in the exam system", either at GCSE or A level, was the most frequently chosen source of concern across all respondent groups, a concern that still exists.

**Teachers and young people's perception of the stress placed on them by GCSEs remains a key concern but is not held to the same degree by all other groups**

2.1.9 By a considerable margin, teachers were most likely to report that GCSEs put too much stress on teachers, with one in two (50 per cent) agreeing with the statement compared with no more than one in three among any other group. At the other end of the spectrum, parents (20 per cent), employers (14 per cent) and the general public (16 per cent) were least likely to feel this was the case.

2.1.10 When considering the stress put on students by GCSEs, young people were the most likely to agree that it is too much, with nearly half stating this opinion (46 per cent). Secondly, the statement was supported most frequently by parents and teachers (38 per cent and 34 per cent). Employers were significantly more likely than all other groups to disagree with the suggestion that GCSEs put too much stress on students, with a majority (56 per cent) stating this opinion.

2.1.11 The findings in this wave of the perceptions study echo the two previous years where students were concerned about “too much pressure / stress” placed on them by GCSEs. In previous waves this issue was a recurrent concern raised by parents and, to a lesser extent, members of the public.

**The level of understanding of the new 9-1 grading scale is low amongst young people and parents and not as widespread as may be expected amongst teaching professionals**

2.1.12 A majority of young people and parents did not understand the new 9-1 grading scale to be used in new GCSEs. Sixty four per cent of young people disagreed that they understood the new grading scale. Just over half (54 per cent) of parents disagreed that they understood the new 9-1 grading scale.

2.1.13 Headteachers were significantly more likely than all other groups to agree that they understood the new 9-1 grading scale to be used in new GCSEs. Sixty eight per cent of headteachers were in agreement compared to a fifth (21%) who disagreed. In comparison, a similar proportion of teachers disagreed (43 per cent) or agreed (39 per cent) that they understood the new 9-1 grading scale to be used in new GCSEs.

**Views from those closest to the education system on specific aspects of GCSE reform were mixed; and parents, the public and employers were less able to express an opinion**

2.1.14 Headteachers, young people and HEIs were strongest in their agreement that the move to linear end of course assessment is a bad thing at GCSE. Teachers, in contrast to headteachers, were split in their view of whether the move to linear end of course assessment was a bad thing. Four out of ten (41 per cent) agreed and almost the same proportion (42 per cent) disagreed, with 15 per cent who neither agreed nor disagreed.

2.1.15 Headteachers (60 per cent), teachers (45 per cent) and young people (39 per cent) were more likely to agree than disagree that the removal of tiering (where possible) is a bad thing. However, amongst the general public, parents, young people, HEIs and employers there is a sizeable proportion who neither agreed nor disagreed or did not know.

2.1.16 Teachers, headteachers and HEIs were strongest in their agreement that the reduction in teacher assessment in GCSE is a good thing. Young people (48 per cent in disagreement) were significantly more likely than any other group to disagree that the reduction in teacher assessment in GCSEs is a good thing.

### **3 Perceptions of A levels**

**Headteachers were strongest in their view that their confidence in the A level system is lower than it was last year. Although mixed views are offered with regards to the maintaining of standards and the accuracy of marking, headteachers continue to be most concerned**

- 3.1.1 Headteachers are significantly more likely than all other groups to agree that compared to last year they are less confident in the A level system – 49 per cent compared with 37 per cent of teachers, 26 per cent of young people, 23 per cent of parents, 21 per cent of employers and HEIs and 19 per cent of the general public.
- 3.1.2 Conversely, headteachers were also significantly more likely than all other groups to agree that A level standards are maintained year on year – 49 per cent compared with 42 per cent of teachers, 35 per cent of parents, 34 per cent of young people and employers and 32 per cent of HEIs. At the other end of the spectrum HEIs are most likely to disagree that A level standards are maintained year on year – 43 per cent compared with 27 per cent of headteachers and employers, 26 per cent of teachers, 25 per cent of parents, 24 per cent of the general public and 20 per cent of young people.
- 3.1.3 Headteachers (44 per cent) were significantly more likely than all other groups to disagree that the marking of A levels is accurate and also are significantly more likely than all other groups to agree that compared to last year the accuracy of marking of A levels has deteriorated (47 per cent). The finding that headteachers have concerns over the accuracy of the marking of A levels follows the findings of wave 12 of this research which reported that headteachers reported the lowest levels of confidence in the grading and marking of A levels.

**Level of trust in A levels remains high among respondents, as was agreement that A levels are well understood**

- 3.1.4 A majority of all groups agreed that A levels are a trusted qualification. Nine out of ten headteachers (88 per cent) reported this compared with 79 per cent of teachers, 77 per cent of parents, 75 per cent of employers, 72 per cent of the general public and 71 per cent of HEIs. Eight in ten (82 per cent) young people agreed that A levels are a trusted qualification. There was also consistent agreement that A levels are well understood by people, with a majority of all groups in agreement with this.

3.1.5 The findings reported here that the A level qualification is ‘trusted’ and ‘well understood’ by people are in line with the previous wave of this research that established these aspects as key strengths of the A level qualification.

**As with GCSEs, those within the system are most likely to report that there has been too much change in the A level system**

3.1.6 Regarding change within the A level system, both headteachers (80 per cent) and teachers (67 per cent) were more likely to agree that there is too much change within the system. Other groups were considerably less likely to agree - 56 per cent of HEIs, 50 per cent of young people, 44 per cent of parents, 40 per cent of employers and 39 per cent of the general public.

3.1.7 While not asked in a directly comparable way, the findings reported here corroborate previous waves of this research. The previous wave (12) of this research identified that “constant change in the exam system” was the most frequently reported concern about the A level system by headteachers, teachers, students, parents and the public.

**A quarter of HEIs disagreed that A levels are good preparation for further study. Concerns were also raised from HEIs and employers that A levels develop a broad range of skills**

3.1.8 HEIs were significantly more likely than all other groups to disagree that A levels are good preparation for further study – 25 per cent stated this compared with eight per cent of teachers, seven per cent of young people and the general public, four per cent of headteachers, and three per cent of parents and employers.

3.1.9 Furthermore, both HEIs and employers were most likely to disagree that A levels develop a broad range of skills for students with 43 per cent of HEIs and 35 per cent of employers stating this, compared with 27 per cent of the general public, 26 per cent of teachers, 23 per cent of young people, 21 per cent of parents and 20 per cent of headteachers.

**Over half of HEIs agreed that A levels needed reform**

3.1.10 Higher Education institutions were significantly more likely than all other groups to feel that A levels needed reform, with more than half (55 per cent) stating their agreement. School staff were most stark in their disagreement with the suggestion that A levels needed reform; half of headteachers (51 per cent) and two-in-five teachers (40 per cent) disagreed with the statement.

**Teachers and students themselves were most likely to agree that A levels put stress on them – a view not shared to the same degree by other groups**

3.1.11 With the exception of young people, teachers were significantly more likely than all other groups to agree A levels put too much stress on teachers – 34 per cent of teachers stated this.

3.1.12 Young people were significantly more likely than all other groups to agree that A levels put too much stress on students – 64 per cent. With the exception of headteachers, employers were most likely to disagree that A levels puts too much stress on students with over half (51 per cent) stating this.

**The groups closest to the school system – young people, teachers and headteachers – were the ones most likely to feel the move to linear end of course assessment is a bad thing at the A level**

3.1.13 Each of these groups were much more likely to agree than disagree with this statement, with close to half agreeing in each case (53 per cent among young people, 56 per cent among headteachers, and 46 per cent among teachers).

**By a significant margin, headteachers were more likely than any other group to feel that the disadvantages of decoupling the AS from the A level outweigh the advantages**

3.1.14 Three-in-five headteachers stated they agreed with this statement (62 per cent). While teachers were less convinced than headteachers that the disadvantages of decoupling the AS from the A level outweigh the advantages, nearly half (45 per cent) were still in agreement.

## **4 Perceptions of alternative qualifications**

**International A levels and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme were most consistently considered to be of equivalent challenge to A levels**

4.1.1 A small majority of all sample groups (apart from employers) agreed that International A levels and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme are of equivalent challenge to A levels.

**Young people do not consider BTEC (Level 3) qualifications as equivalent in challenge to A levels or to be perceived as valued as highly as other qualifications – a view not consistently held by all other groups**

4.1.2 Seventy per cent of young people disagreed that BTECs (Level 3) are equivalent in challenge to A levels. The majority of headteachers (52 per cent) and teachers (57 per cent) also held the same sentiment. In contrast, parents (53 per cent) and the general public (46 per cent) are significantly more likely to agree that BTECs (Level 3) are equivalent in challenge to A levels.

4.1.3 Young people, teachers and headteachers were consistent in their disagreement that BTECs (Level 1/ Level 2) are valued as highly as GCSEs by HE. Seven out of ten teachers (71 per cent), headteachers (66 per cent) and young people (67 per cent) disagreed that BTECs (Level 1/ Level 2) are valued as highly – significantly higher than the proportions of HEIs (51%), the general public (49 per cent), employers (42 per cent) and parents (41 per cent) who reported this.

**There was strong agreement from all groups that International A levels and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme are good preparation for further study. There were more mixed views as to whether BTEC (Level 3) qualifications are good preparation for further study.**

4.1.4 Seven out of ten of the general public (71 per cent), parents (70 per cent) and employers (65 per cent) agreed that BTECs (Level 3) qualifications are good preparation for further study. In contrast, one in three young people (33 per cent) disagreed that BTEC (Level 3) qualifications are good preparation for further study, significantly higher than the level of disagreement from any other group.

**International A levels and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme were most consistently equally valued as A levels by HE and by employers.**

4.1.5 There was consistent agreement from all groups that International A levels are valued as highly as A levels by HE - a majority of all groups offered agreement. Following a similar pattern there was also consistent agreement from a majority of all groups that the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is valued as highly as A levels by HE.

4.1.6 Six out of ten employers (62 per cent) agreed that International A levels are valued as highly as A levels by employers. This was on a par with the proportion of headteachers (61 per cent) and young people (64 per cent) who reported this. It was also perceived that the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme was valued as highly as A levels by employers.

## **5 Perceptions of Ofqual**

### **As may be expected, awareness and knowledge about Ofqual is greatest from those working in the school system**

- 5.1.1 Headteachers and teachers were significantly more likely than all other groups to say that they were aware Ofqual is the independent Regulator of qualifications, examinations and assessments in England. At 99 per cent this was almost all the headteachers surveyed and over nine in ten (92 per cent) teachers. In contrast, general public and young people were significantly more likely than all other groups to state that they were not aware of Ofqual's role as a regulator, with 65 per cent and 64 per cent stating this respectively.
- 5.1.2 Headteachers were significantly more likely than all other groups to have a substantial amount of knowledge about Ofqual, with just over eight in ten (81 per cent) stating they knew a lot/ fair amount about the organisation. At the other end of the spectrum, the general public were significantly more likely than all other groups to say they have never heard of Ofqual with one in two (51 per cent) stating this.

### **Teachers are the group most likely to question the reputation of Ofqual as a trusted organisation and that Ofqual communicates information well – with a sizeable minority expressing disagreement**

- 5.1.3 Teachers were significantly more likely than all other groups (except headteachers) to disagree that Ofqual is a trusted organisation with one in three (30 per cent) stating this. Teachers were also more likely to agree that Ofqual has a negative reputation; four out of ten (37 per cent) stating this. Other groups who felt this way included headteachers and young people (37 per cent).
- 5.1.4 Headteachers are significantly more likely than all other groups to agree that Ofqual communicates information well (34 per cent). Teachers, on the other hand, do not share the same view with just under half (46 per cent) disagreeing with this statement.

## Introduction

### 1 Background

1.1.1 This report presents the findings of a wave 13 of the Annual Perceptions of A Levels, GCSEs and Other Qualifications survey. This research project was commissioned by Ofqual and the research was managed by YouGov.

#### Context

1.1.2 In 2010, The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009, established Ofqual as an independent statutory body with responsibility for the regulation of general and vocational qualifications in England and vocational qualifications in Northern Ireland, taking over the regulatory role of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA).

1.1.3 Ofqual regulates through recognising and monitoring organisations that deliver qualifications. Ofqual must collect and utilise insight on perceptions of the qualifications and qualifications system from the range of stakeholders that work with and utilise them.

1.1.4 To support this requirement Ofqual has continued (research originally commissioned by the QCA) to annually assess teachers', parents', students' and the general public's perceptions of the A level examination system. This large-scale research survey is unique in providing a wide overview of perceptions of general and other qualifications from the users of these qualifications.

1.1.5 Previous waves of the survey have explored perceptions of A levels from 2003 to 2013 and, since 2004, perceptions of GCSEs. Since 2011, the research has included questions about other academic and vocational qualifications for 15 to 19 year olds. From 2008, the research has also explored the awareness, perceptions and effectiveness of Ofqual. This allows Ofqual to track perceptions of how well it is carrying out its regulatory duties.

1.1.6 This research has been conducted during a period of reform and change in the education system. Recent reform can be traced back to the publication of the government white paper 'The Importance of Teaching'<sup>2</sup> (2010) which proposed reforms to both A levels and GCSEs.

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<sup>2</sup> The Importance of Teaching: The Schools White Paper 2010 (Department for Education)  
[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/175429/CM-7980.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175429/CM-7980.pdf)

- 1.1.7 More recently, and important to the context in which wave 13 of the Perceptions Survey was undertaken, was the comprehensive reform of GCSEs announced in February 2013 through a letter to Ofqual from the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove<sup>3</sup>. This letter outlined the Government's policy on reforms to qualifications at the end of Key Stage 4.
- 1.1.8 The Secretary of State for Education has set out his intentions that new GCSEs in England should remain accessible with good teaching, to the same proportion of students who currently take them, and there must be an increase in demand at the level of what is widely considered to be a pass (currently indicated by grade C) to reflect that of high-performing jurisdictions.
- 1.1.9 The new qualifications are being introduced in a phased way, with the first being taught from September 2015. Ofqual has already consulted stakeholders on the many aspects of the implementation of these reformed qualifications.
- 1.1.10 The requirement of this project was to collect evidence from representative samples of stakeholders to ensure that Ofqual gains robust insight into current perceptions of qualifications

### **Geographical coverage**

- 1.1.11 Ofqual regulates general and vocational qualifications in England. The focus of this research was to gain the perceptions of headteachers, teachers, young people, parents, employers, HEIs and the general public in England. Samples of these groups were drawn from within England only.

### **Users of statistics**

- 1.1.12 The annual perceptions survey is a long running measure of perceptions of the qualifications system. Users of the statistics produced in wave 13 are the Department for Education, Education Select Committee, Awarding Organisations, Media, Subject Associations and Teaching Unions.

### **Related statistics and publications**

- 1.1.13 A number of other statistical releases and publications relate to this one:

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<sup>3</sup> <http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/l/ofqual%20letter.pdf>

- Statistical First Release: Revised GCSE and Equivalent Results in England, 2013 to 2014,<sup>4</sup> published by the Department for Education, covers students' achievements in GCSEs and the equivalent regulated qualifications in schools at the end of Key Stage 4.
- Statistical First Release: A Level and other Level 3 Results 2013/14 (Revised),<sup>5</sup> published by the Department for Education, provides information on achievements in advanced level examinations.

## User feedback

1.1.14 Ofqual is running a rolling series of online surveys to make sure its statistical releases meet your needs. Ofqual would like to invite you to take part in the online survey for this release. <http://surveys.ofqual.gov.uk/s3/Appeals>

1.1.15 It will take about ten minutes to complete the online survey. Your responses will remain entirely confidential in any reports published about the survey. If you have any questions or would prefer a paper or large-type copy of the survey, please contact us at: [statistics@ofqual.gov.uk](mailto:statistics@ofqual.gov.uk).

## 2 Research objectives

2.1.1 The aim of this research project was:

- To investigate Heads of schools', teachers', students', parents', the general public's, employers' and 'HEIs' perceptions and levels of confidence in qualifications and the examination system, as well as awareness and ratings of Ofqual.

2.1.2 The objectives of the research were to investigate Heads of schools', teachers', students', parents', the general public's, employers' and 'HEIs':

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/revised-gcse-and-equivalent-results-in-england-2013-to-2014>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/a-level-and-other-level-3-results-2013-to-2014-revised>

- Overall perceptions and confidence in qualifications taken by young people, particularly A levels, GCSEs and other academic and vocational qualifications delivered in schools;
- Confidence in qualifications' standards and the examination system – both in its implementation and regulation; and
- Awareness and perceptions of Ofqual.

### 3 Methods and data limitations

#### Overview of method

3.1.1 Wave 13 of the Perceptions Survey was carried out by YouGov, on behalf of Ofqual. The survey was conducted online using YouGov's proprietary survey system. This mirrors the approach adopted in wave 12 of the Perceptions Survey and offers comparability in the mode of data collection. Wave 12 was the first wave to be conducted entirely online with previous waves of this survey using telephone and face-to-face interviews to gather the perceptions of participants.

3.1.2 The fieldwork was conducted between the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2015 and 27<sup>th</sup> February 2015.

#### Sampling

3.1.3 The sampling of participants was designed with a view to achieving respondent samples that were representative of the wider population. Fuller details of this sampling procedure and its effectiveness are provided in appendix B.

3.1.4 The final achieved sample for each of the target groups was as follows:

- 241 headteachers;
- 704 teachers of GCSE, A level and other academic<sup>6</sup> and vocational qualifications<sup>7</sup> offered to 15 to 19 year olds (referred to throughout this report as teachers);
- 324 young people, defined as those aged 15 to 19 who are studying/have studied/will study A levels and/or GCSEs and/or an academic qualification defined as the Level 1/Level 2 certificates (commonly known as IGCSE and

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<sup>6</sup> Ofqual defines academic qualifications as qualifications that are assessed by formal examinations and moderated coursework

<sup>7</sup> Ofqual defines vocational qualifications as qualifications that are taught in schools and colleges that prepare students for a particular type of job

referred to as this throughout the report), the International Baccalaureate, BTECs (Level 1/ Level 2 or level 3), the Pre-U and Freestanding Maths and other academic qualifications (including vocational and applied);

- 353 parents/carers of students who are taking or who have just taken A levels, GCSEs and/or other academic qualifications (including vocational and applied);
- 291 academic professionals<sup>8</sup> who had knowledge about the process of offering applicants a place on an undergraduate course at their institution (referred to throughout this report as HEIs);
- 274 senior/middle managers who work for an organisation that has recruited young people (aged 16-25) in the past 12 months (referred to throughout this report as employers);
- 1,005 members of the public

3.1.5 The final achieved samples are structured to be representative of the relevant target populations. We therefore conclude that based upon the sampling procedures the samples delivered for headteachers, teachers, the general public, parents, students, HEIs and employers are robust. However, while the sampling approach has aimed to identify groups of participants that are representative, given that a survey of this kind only captures the views of those involved, throughout this report responses attributed to groups (for example, teachers, parents etc.) reflect only those respondents included in the study.

### **Questionnaire design**

3.1.6 The wave 13 questionnaire was designed by Ofqual in conjunction with the YouGov project team. The survey covered themes explored in previous waves of the research, namely, perceptions of A levels, GCSEs and other qualifications and the systems that deliver them. The themes and evidence gathered by this survey are comparable with previous waves of the perceptions survey. However, wave 13 survey adopted a new approach of using statements asked against a standard 5 point Likert scale (with an additional 'don't know' option) to collect the majority of evidence on the perceptions of A levels, GCSEs and other qualifications and the systems that deliver them.

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<sup>8</sup> This sample consisted on academics and a small number of admission staff. Please see the technical appendix for a description of the sample profile

3.1.7 In the main the same set of questions was posed to each of the sample groups with a small number of attitudinal statements only deemed relevant to employers and HEIs respectively. A copy of the core questionnaire is available alongside publication of this report.

### **Guidance on analysis**

3.1.8 Throughout this report, percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number. Due to rounding, percentages may not always add up to 100%. The report summarises the data for each question using charts and tables. The data has not been replicated in full for each question across each sample group – the intention of this report is to summarise the main themes in the data and not produce a full replication of the entire dataset.

3.1.9 Each chapter of the report firstly compares differences across sample groups for each of the questions asked of all groups. Statistical significant differences between the sample groups are highlighted in the narrative.

3.1.10 Where deemed relevant the individual chapters then features a ‘spotlight’ section on each sample group. The purpose of these sections is to highlight differences in the data within each of the sample groups. The research project was not designed to provide representative samples of each of these sub-groups (for example teachers in Academy schools or boys or girls). Therefore, some caution is advised when interpreting these findings. The spotlight sections present the views of those who responded to the surveys and are indicative findings that may not be representative of the wider population of these sub groups.

3.1.11 Reported differences are based on significance testing and the effective base acknowledges the sample sizes of each sub-group to assess whether the differences reported are true differences between the sub-groups who responded to the surveys. Not all statistically significant differences have been identified and care has been taken to use more reliable base sizes of over 50 respondents. This is YouGov’s approach on all research deliverables.

3.1.12 Within the spotlight section different characteristics within the samples are used to highlight differences. Please see appendix C for a glossary of terms used.

3.1.13 Below each figure an ‘effective base’ is quoted, which differs from the sample sizes given above. These numbers are a product of the data weighting procedure that is applied (see appendix B) and are the base used for statistical analysis.

## **Data limitations and caveats**

- 3.1.14 The sampling approach (outlined in more detail in appendix B) and the mode of data collection in the wave 13 survey are directly comparable with the approach adopted in wave 12<sup>9</sup>. As appendix B demonstrates, the achieved samples across all groups were representative of the target populations and the effective bases demonstrate that the weighting applied has not been heavy and overly distorting.
- 3.1.15 The sampling approach for employers and HEIs, while broadly similar with that adopted in wave 11, differed in this wave in the composition of the final sample. For employers the addition of a screening question that ensured respondents worked at an organisation that has recruited at least one young person aged 16-24 in the last 12 months differs from the approach adopted in wave 11. For HEIs in wave 11 the final achieved sample relied heavily on central admissions staff whereas the approach adopted here has delivered a sample of HEI professionals who are responsible for admissions to specific courses rather than being drawn from central admissions staff. Caution must be advised in comparing data drawn from employers and HEIs in wave 11 and the data in this wave due to sampling differences and the change in data collection mode.
- 3.1.16 A further factor that influences the confidence we have in comparing results from wave 13 with previous waves of the survey is questionnaire design effect. As previously discussed, the wave 13 survey covered the same themes as the wave 12 survey but altered the approach in how the questions were asked. A move in this wave to an approach whereby statements are asked against a standardised agreement scale was deemed the most robust way of collecting data in wave 13, but differs from the approach adopted in wave 12. Therefore, in the report, direct comparisons have not been made between questions previously asked using a multiple choice list and agreement scale questions from this wave. Where relevant, comparisons have been made but we advise caution and ask readers to note the alteration in questionnaire design.

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<sup>9</sup> Please note in wave 12 employers and HEIs were not included and were previously surveyed in wave 11, conducted via the telephone

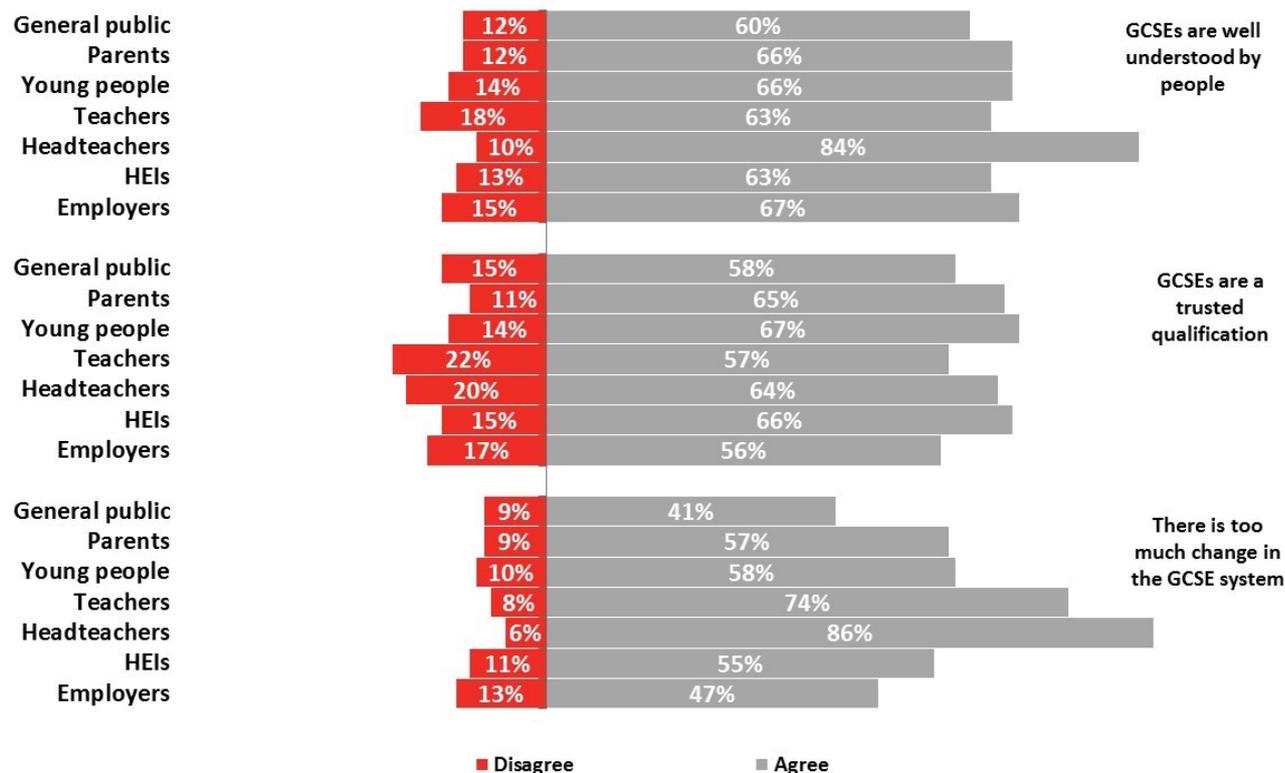
## **Section 1: Perceptions of GCSEs**

The first section of this report focuses on respondents' overall perceptions of GCSE qualifications.

### **4 Overall perceptions of GCSEs**

- 4.1.1 Headteachers were significantly more likely than all other groups to feel that GCSEs are well understood by people, with 83 per cent in agreement compared with no more than 67 per cent among the other sample groups, although, a majority of all groups reported that they agreed that GCSEs are well understood.
- 4.1.2 Aside from headteachers, the various groups were equally likely to agree that GCSEs are well understood, with approximately two in three stating this opinion across the board (67 per cent among employers, 66 per cent among parents and young people, and 63 per cent among teachers and Higher Education institutions).
- 4.1.3 A majority of all groups agreed that GCSEs are a trusted qualification, although the level of this agreement did differ. Young people (67 per cent), HEIs (66 per cent) and parents (65 per cent) offered the highest levels of agreement. These groups were significantly more likely to agree that GCSEs are a trusted qualification than the general public (58 per cent), teachers (57 per cent) and employers (56 per cent).
- 4.1.4 Nearly two in three headteachers (64 per cent) agreed that GCSEs are a trusted qualification, higher than the levels of agreement from the general public, teachers and employers but not a statistically significant difference.
- 4.1.5 The findings that GCSEs are well understood and a trusted qualification echo the findings of previous waves of the perception survey. In wave 12 it was identified that GCSEs being well understood and being seen as a trusted qualification were key strengths of the qualification. This sentiment has continued into this research.
- 4.1.6 When asked to state their opinion on whether or not there is too much change in the GCSE system, teachers and headteachers stood out, being significantly more likely than any other group to agree that there is too much change.
- 4.1.7 The concern that there was too much change in the GCSE system was apparent for all groups, with all groups more likely to agree than disagree that there is too much change in the GCSE system. These findings show that concerns over the amount of change in the qualification system remain high. In wave 12 of this research “constant change in the exam system”, either at GCSE or A level, was the most frequently chosen source of concern across all respondent groups, a concern that still exists.

Figure 1: Overall perceptions of GCSEs



Effective base: All respondents (Nat rep n=998; Parents n=352; Young people n=313; Teachers n=526; Headteachers n=227; HEIs n=259; Employers n=210)

## 5 Skills and preparation

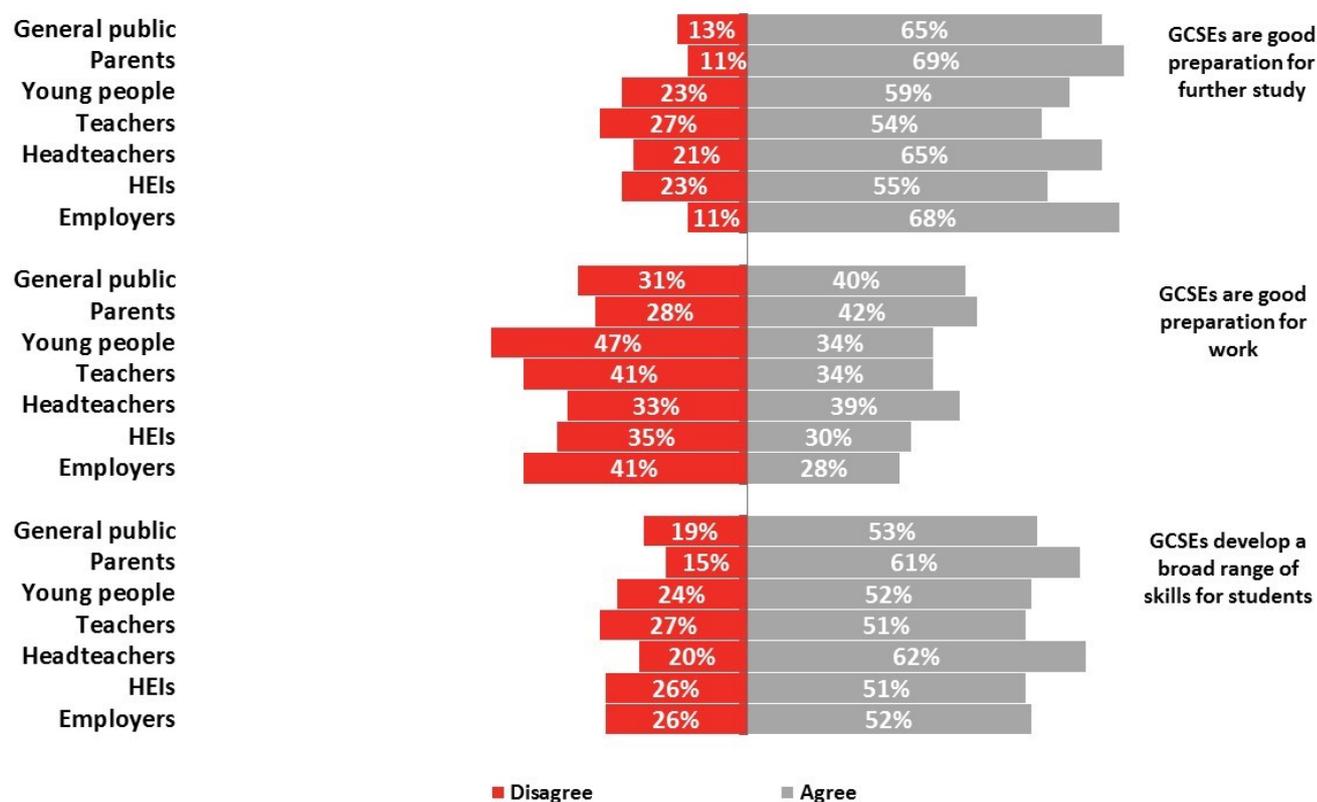
5.1.1 Parents were significantly more likely than young people, teachers and HEIs to believe that GCSEs are good preparation for further study (69 per cent compared with 59 per cent, 54 per cent and 55 per cent, respectively).

5.1.2 Headteachers, teachers, young people and HEIs displayed higher levels of disagreement regarding this statement than parents, employers and the general public; approximately one in four stated they did not agree that GCSEs are good preparation for further study (21 per cent, 27 per cent, 23 per cent and 23 per cent, respectively). A majority in each of these groups, however, were still in support that GCSEs are good preparation for further study.

5.1.3 Levels of agreement were lower from all groups that GCSEs are good preparation for further work, with no majority consensus from any group.

- 5.1.4 There were, however some differences in opinion. Parents and the general public were significantly more likely than HEIs, teachers and young people to agree that GCSEs are good preparation for work (42 per cent and 40 per cent compared with 30 per cent, 34 per cent and 34 per cent, respectively). This trend is generally consistent with differences in perceptions regarding GCSEs being good preparation for further study.
- 5.1.5 Employers themselves were significantly more likely to disagree than agree that GCSEs are good preparation for further study. While 28 per cent did believe that GCSEs are good preparation for work, 41 per cent did not.
- 5.1.6 Parents and headteachers were significantly more likely than any other group to agree that GCSEs develop a broad range of skills. Parents consistently demonstrated their support for the value of GCSEs, with three in five (61 per cent) agreeing that GCSEs develop a broad range of skills for students. Headteachers' perspective was very similar to that of parents, with three in five (62 per cent) indicating they felt that GCSEs do develop a broad range of skills. In contrast half of the general public, young people, employers, teachers and HEIs agreed that GCSEs develop a broad range of skills.

Figure 2: Skills and preparation



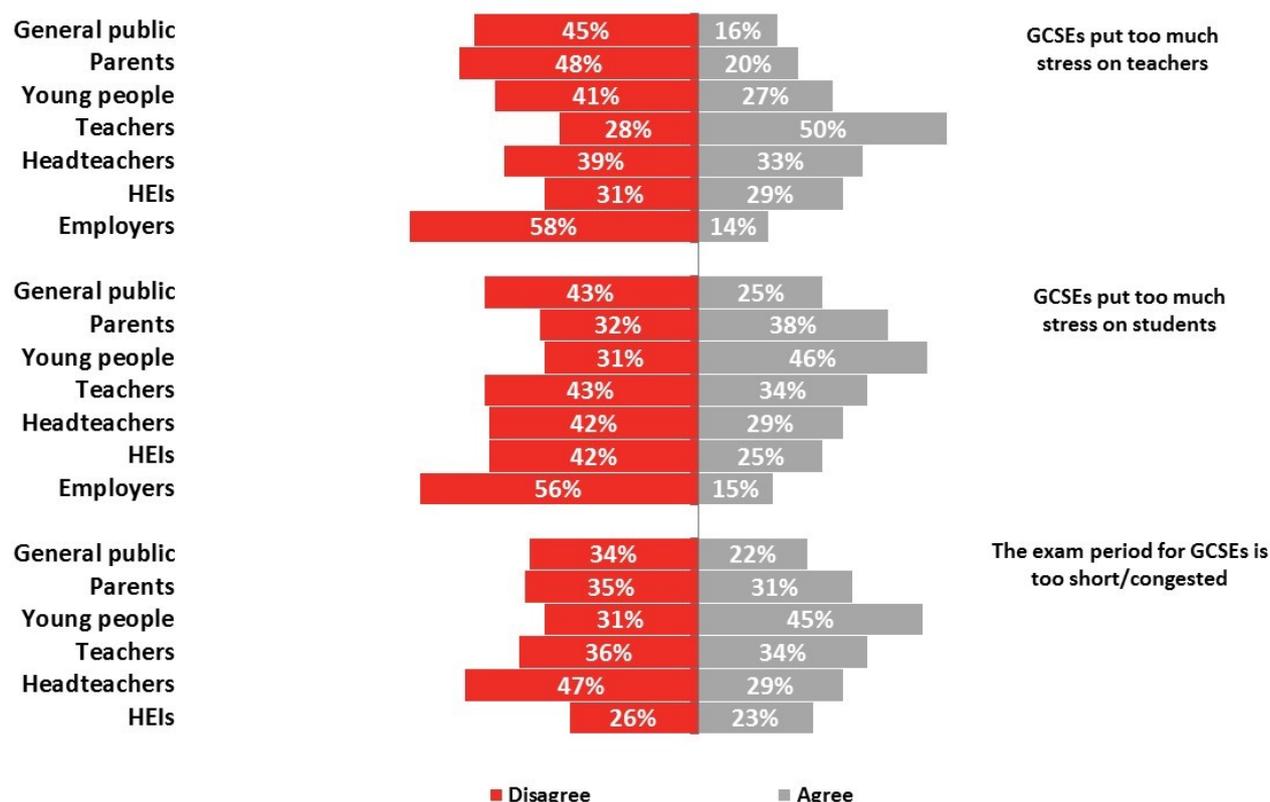
Effective base: All respondents (Nat rep n=998; Parents n=352; Young people n=313; Teachers n=526; Headteachers n=227; HEIs n=259; Employers n=210)

## **6 Stress and time constraints**

- 6.1.1 By a considerable margin, teachers themselves were most likely to report that GCSEs put too much stress on teachers, with one in two (50 per cent) agreeing with the statement compared with no more than one in three among any other group.
- 6.1.2 In direct contrast to the view of teachers, six out of ten employers (58 per cent) disagreed that GCSEs put too much stress on teachers; significantly higher levels of disagreement than that offered by any other group.
- 6.1.3 For headteachers, young people and HEIs opinion was more split between agreeing and disagreeing with the statement (33 per cent agreement and 39 per cent disagreement for headteachers, 27 per cent agreement and 41 per cent disagreement for young people, and 29 per cent agreement and 31 per cent disagreement for HEIs).
- 6.1.4 When considering the stress put on students by GCSEs, young people themselves were significantly more likely than any other group to agree that GCSEs put too much stress on students, with nearly half stating this opinion (46 per cent). Secondly, the statement was supported most frequently by parents and teachers (38 per cent and 34 per cent).
- 6.1.5 On trend with perceptions of stress on teachers, employers were significantly more likely than all other groups to disagree with the suggestion that GCSEs put too much stress on students, with a majority (56 per cent) stating this opinion.
- 6.1.6 Similar to perceptions of the stress placed on students, young people displayed the highest levels of agreement when it came to feeling that the exam period for GCSEs is too short and/or congested, with 45 per cent having said they believed this to be true.
- 6.1.7 In strong opposition to this view, nearly half of headteachers (47 per cent) indicated they do not believe the exam period is too short/congested. They were significantly more likely to state this opinion than all other groups.
- 6.1.8 Among the general public, there was more uncertainty around whether or not the exam period is too short/congested, with 26 per cent having neither agreed nor disagreed and another 19 per cent having said they did not know.

6.1.9 The findings in this wave of the perceptions study echo the two previous years where students were concerned about “too much pressure / stress” placed on them by GCSEs. In previous waves this issue was a recurrent concern raised by parents and, to a lesser extent, members of the public. In this and previous waves teachers were also concerned about “too much pressure / stress on teachers”.

**Figure 3: Stress and time constraints**



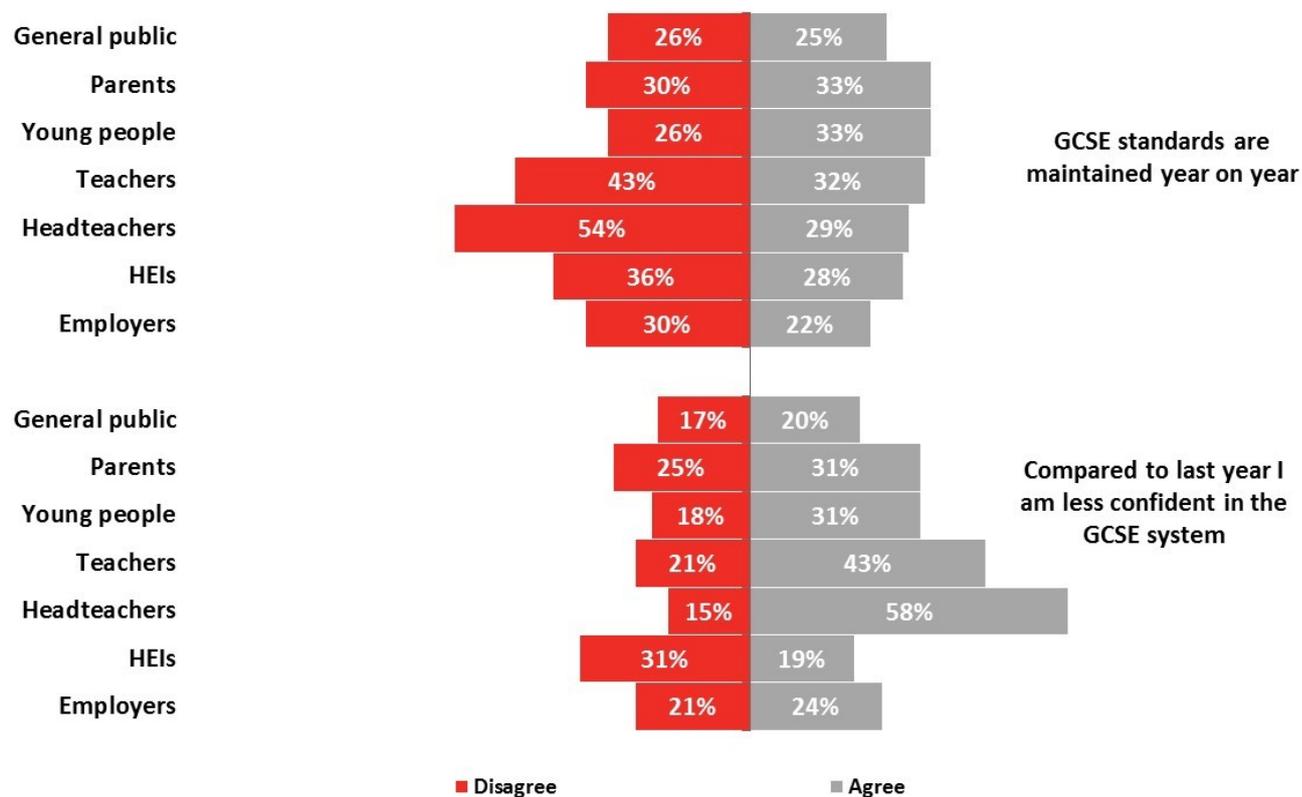
Effective base: All respondents (Nat rep n=998; Parents n=352; Young people n=313; Teachers n=526; Headteachers n=227; HEIs n=259; Employers n=210)

## 7 Confidence in GCSEs

7.1.1 Headteachers and teachers were least likely to believe that GCSE standards are maintained year on year, with 54 per cent of headteachers and 43 per cent of teachers stating their disagreement with the statement. Headteachers were significantly more likely than any other group to disagree that GCSE standards are maintained year on year.

- 7.1.2 Among young people and parents, one in three (33 per cent) reported they agreed that GCSE standards are maintained year on year. While these levels of agreement were on a par with those of headteachers and teachers, young people and parents were significantly less likely than those groups to disagree (26 per cent and 30 per cent, respectively).
- 7.1.3 Following on from teachers' and headteachers' disagreement that GCSE standards are maintained year on year, they were also significantly more likely than any other group to state that compared to last year they are less confident in the GCSE system. Headteachers were particularly likely to feel this way, with a majority (58 per cent) stating their agreement. Among teachers, 43 per cent agreed that they are less confident in the GCSE system than last year. Both groups were significantly more likely to agree than disagree that compared to last year they are less confident in the GCSE system.
- 7.1.4 HEIs were most likely to say they are not less confident in the GCSE system than they were last year, with almost one third (31 per cent) stating their disagreement. They were the only group to be more likely to disagree than to agree (19 per cent) with the statement.
- 7.1.5 Previous waves of the Perception Survey have identified that there has been a fall in the level of confidence in GCSEs. These findings are consistent with this trend and, in particular, falling levels of confidence in the GCSE system amongst teachers and headteachers.

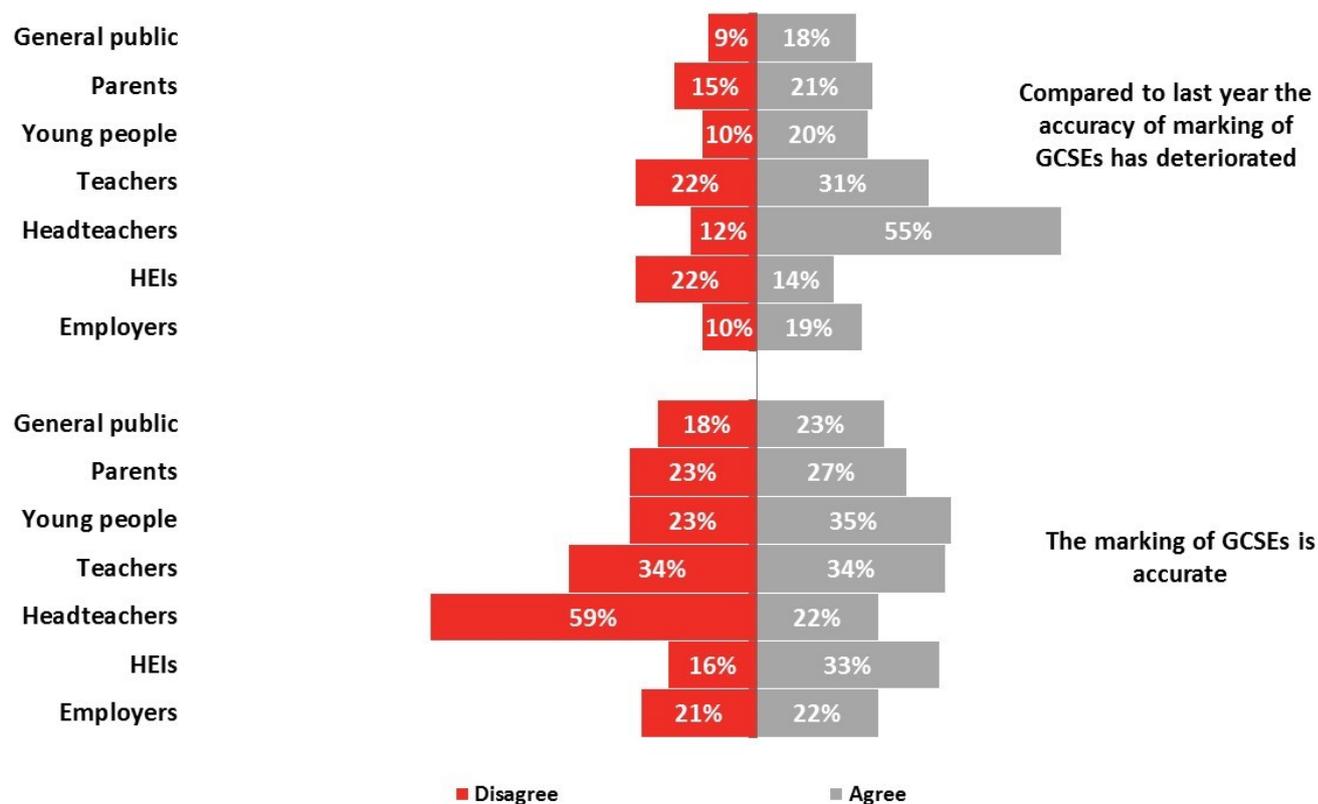
Figure 4: Confidence in GCSE standards and the system



Effective base: All respondents (Nat rep n=998; Parents n=352; Young people n=313; Teachers n=526; Headteachers n=227; HEIs n=259; Employers n=210)

7.1.6 When asked on a similar topic to consider the accuracy of marking of GCSEs, a clear trend emerged with headteachers being significantly more likely than any other group to question the accuracy of marking (figure 5). This finding is in line with the results of the previous wave of this research. While this question was not asked in a directly comparable way, the previous wave 12 identified that headteachers reported the lowest levels of confidence in the grading and marking of GCSEs.

Figure 5: Confidence in marking of GCSEs



Effective base: All respondents (Nat rep n=998; Parents n=352; Young people n=313; Teachers n=526; Headteachers n=227; HEIs n=259; Employers n=210)

7.1.7 Three in five headteachers (59 per cent) disagreed that the marking of GCSEs is accurate. In comparison, teachers were split in their opinion. One third (34 per cent) of teachers disagreed but were equally as likely to agree (34 per cent).

7.1.8 Young people and HEIs were more positive than negative in their view of the accuracy of GCSE marking. A third of young people (35 per cent) and HEIs (33 per cent) agreed that the marking of GCSEs is accurate, significantly higher than the level of disagreement from these groups.

7.1.9 When asked on a similar topic to consider whether or not they believe the accuracy of the marking of GCSEs has deteriorated in the last year, headteachers were once again significantly more likely than any other group to agree that this is the case.

7.1.10 Headteachers felt particularly strongly about this statement and stood out from teachers in the level of their disagreement, with more than half (55 per cent) agreeing. Among teachers, nearly one third (31 per cent) agreed that the marking of GCSEs has deteriorated in the last year, significantly higher than the 22 per cent of teachers that disagreed.

7.1.11 These findings mirror data from the previous wave 12 of the Perceptions Survey that found that headteachers reported the lowest levels of confidence in the accuracy of the marking of GCSEs.

### **Spotlight on headteachers**

- Overall, the headteachers who responded to the survey from maintained, academy and free schools were more likely than those representing independent and private schools to report negative perceptions of change in the GCSE system.
- Headteachers at maintained, academy and free schools more commonly stated that they are less confident in the GCSE system than they were last year (72 per cent among maintained schools and 64 per cent among academies/free schools compared with 32 per cent among independent/private schools), as well as that there is generally too much change in the system (95 per cent and 88 per cent, respectively, compared with 68 per cent).

### **Spotlight on teachers**

- Overall, teachers who teach GCSE qualifications were more likely than those who do not teach GCSE qualifications to support statements regarding the benefits and positive attributes of GCSEs. Current GCSE teachers were more likely than those who don't teach GCSEs to agree that:
  - GCSEs are a trusted qualification (60 per cent compared with 44 per cent);
  - GCSEs are good preparation for further study (58 per cent compared with 38 per cent);
  - GCSEs develop a broad range of skills for students (54 per cent compared with 37 per cent);
- In contrast though teachers who teach GCSE qualifications were also often more likely than those who do not teach GCSEs to agree with statements

related to the stress and negative change of GCSEs. For example, those who teach GCSEs were more likely than those who do not teach GCSEs to believe that:

- GCSEs put too much stress on teachers (54 per cent compared with 37 per cent) as well as on students (36 per cent compared with 23 per cent);
- There is too much change in the GCSE system (79 per cent compared with 55 per cent).
- Overall 44 per cent of GCSE teachers reported that compared to last year they are less confident in the GCSE system, being no more likely than teachers of other qualifications to report this.

### **Spotlight on young people**

- Young people aged 16-19 displayed a variety of differences in opinion to younger teenagers aged 14-15. Overall, the older teenagers were more negative about the value of GCSEs than those more likely to be currently studying GCSEs.
- Young people aged 16-19 were significantly more likely than those aged 14-15 to disagree that:
  - GCSE standards are maintained year on year (26 per cent among 18-19 year-olds and 38 per cent among 16-17 year-olds, compared with 15 per cent among 14-15 year-olds);
  - GCSEs are good preparation for further study (29 per cent among 18-19 year-olds and 33 per cent among 16-17 year-olds, compared with 8 per cent among 14-15 year-olds);
  - GCSEs are good preparation for work (59 per cent among 18-19 year-olds and 54 per cent among 16-17 year-olds, compared with 27 per cent among 14-15 year-olds);
  - GCSEs develop a broad range of skills for students (32 per cent among 18-19 year-olds and 27 per cent among 16-17 year-olds, compared with 13 per cent among 14-15 year-olds).

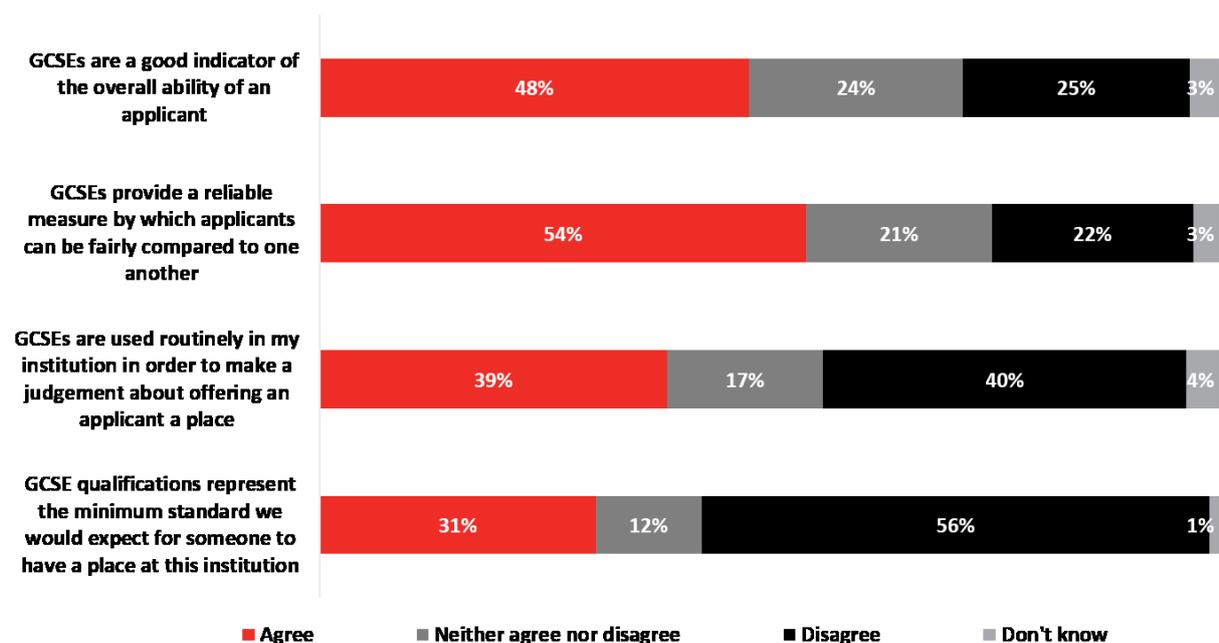
### Spotlight on parents

- Older parents aged 55+ were more positive than younger parents towards the value of GCSEs' ability to prepare students for further study, with four in five (81 per cent) having stated they agreed that GCSEs are good preparation in this sense, compared with 67 per cent of 45-54 year-olds and 66 per cent of 35-44 year-olds.

### Spotlight on higher education

- Roughly one in two HEIs (48 per cent) reported that they believe GCSEs are a good indicator of the overall ability of an applicant.
- Alongside reports of GCSEs being a good indicator of overall ability, a small majority of HEIs (54 per cent) indicated they feel GCSEs provide a reliable measure by which applicants can be fairly compared to one another.
- Less than half of HEIs (39 per cent) reported that GCSEs are used routinely in their institution to make judgements about offering an applicant a place.
- Less than one third (31 per cent) of HEIs said that GCSE qualifications represent the minimum standard they would expect someone to have at their institution. Much more frequently HEIs disagreed with the statement (56 per cent), saying therefore that GCSEs do not represent the minimum standard they would expect.

Figure 6: Perceptions of GCSEs among Higher Education institutions

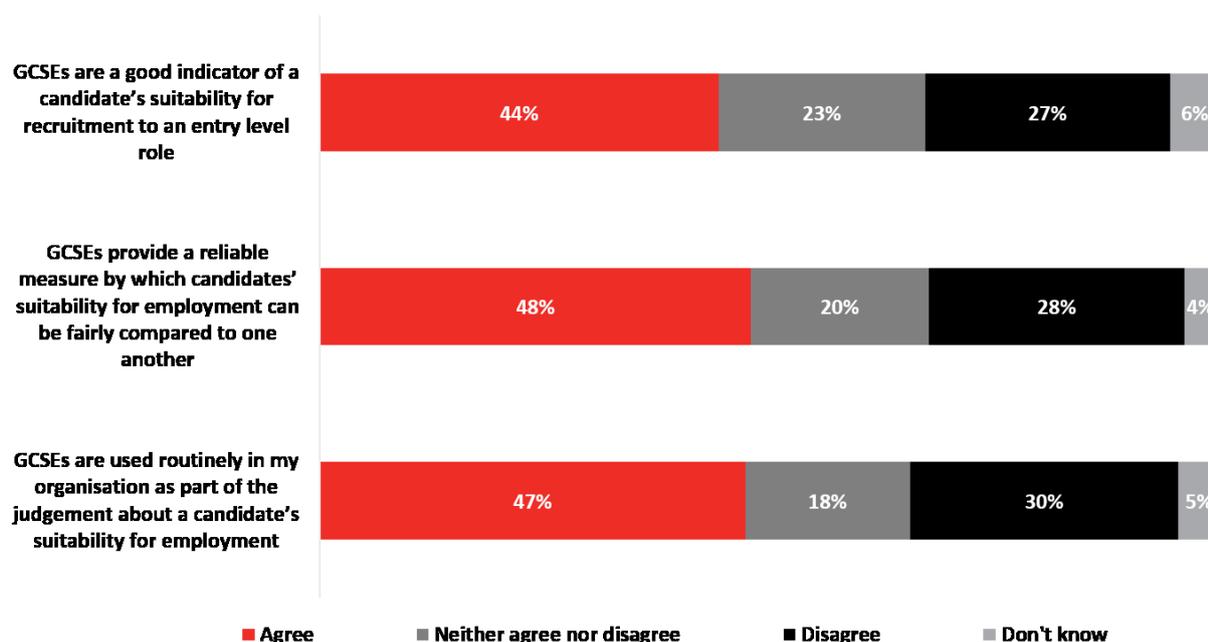


Effective base: HEIs n=259

### Spotlight on employers

- Nearly half of employers (44 per cent) agreed that GCSEs are a good indicator of a candidate’s suitability for recruitment to an entry level role. This proportion is on par with the proportion of HEIs who reported that GCSEs are a good indicator of the overall ability of an applicant (48 per cent).
- Similar proportions agreed that GCSEs provide a reliable measure by which candidates’ suitability for employment can be fairly compared to one another (48 per cent) and that they are used routinely in their organisation for judgement about a candidate’s suitability for employment (47 per cent).
- Within the private sector, organisations operating in the manufacturing and production industries more frequently indicated they believe GCSEs are good preparation for work than those operating in private sector services (41 per cent compared with 23 per cent).

Figure 7: Perceptions of GCSEs among employers



Effective base: All respondents (Nat rep n=998; Parents n=352; Young people n=313; Teachers n=526; Headteachers n=227; HEIs n=259; Employers n=210)

### Spotlight on the general public

- Young adults aged 16-29 were most likely to agree with statements related to the stress caused by GCSEs. They much more commonly felt that GCSEs put too much stress on teachers (29 per cent) and students (39 per cent).

cent) than older adults (14 per cent and 24 per cent among 30-50 year-olds; 11 per cent and 18 per cent among people aged 51+).

- Young adults also displayed more negative attitudes towards the value of GCSEs. They were more likely than older adults to disagree that GCSEs develop a broad range of skills for students (25 per cent compared with 17 per cent among 30-50 year-olds and people aged 51+). They also more frequently disagreed that GCSEs are good preparation for further study (20 per cent) and work (37 per cent) than older adults (13 per cent and 35 per cent among 30-50 year-olds; 9 per cent and 24 per cent among people aged 51+).

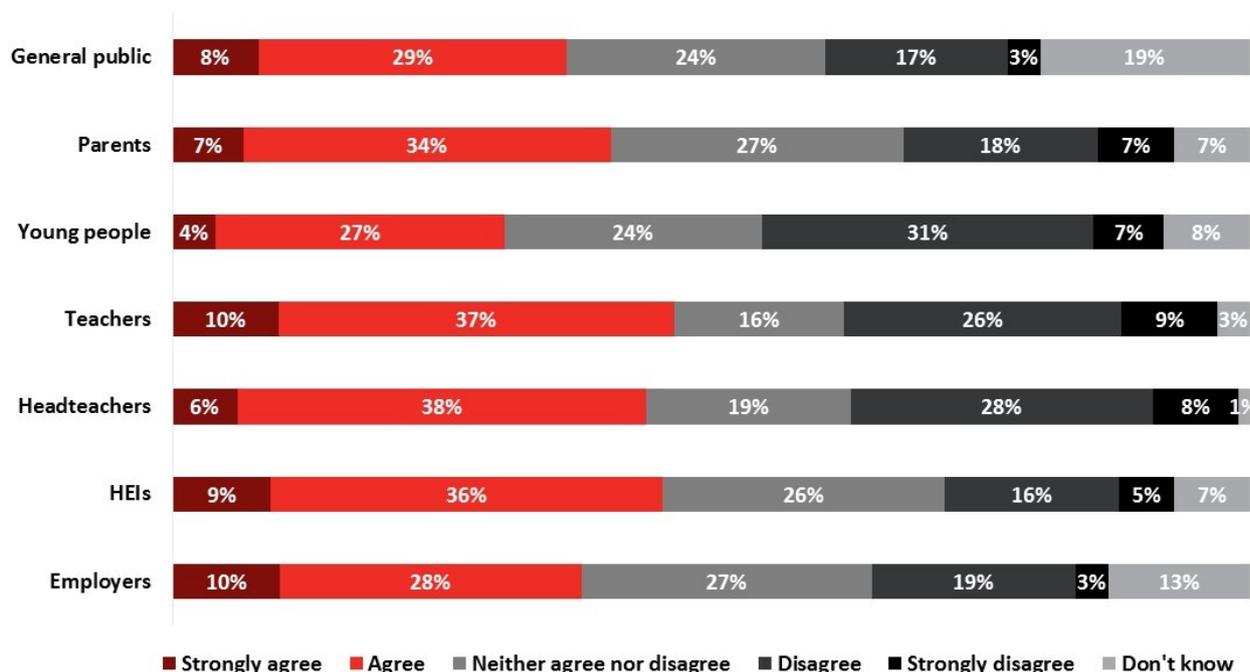
## Section 2: Perceptions of GCSE reform

7.1.12 The second section of this report looks at perceptions around GCSE reforms.

### 8 The need for GCSE reform

8.1.1 Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that GCSEs needed reform. While there was no majority view from any group that GCSEs needed reform or not, a significantly higher proportion of HEIs, teachers, parents, the general public and employers agreed than disagreed that GCSEs needed reform.

Figure 8: ‘GCSEs needed reform’



Effective base: All respondents (Nat rep n=998; Parents n=352; Young people n=313; Teachers n=526; Headteachers n=227; HEIs n=259; Employers n=210)

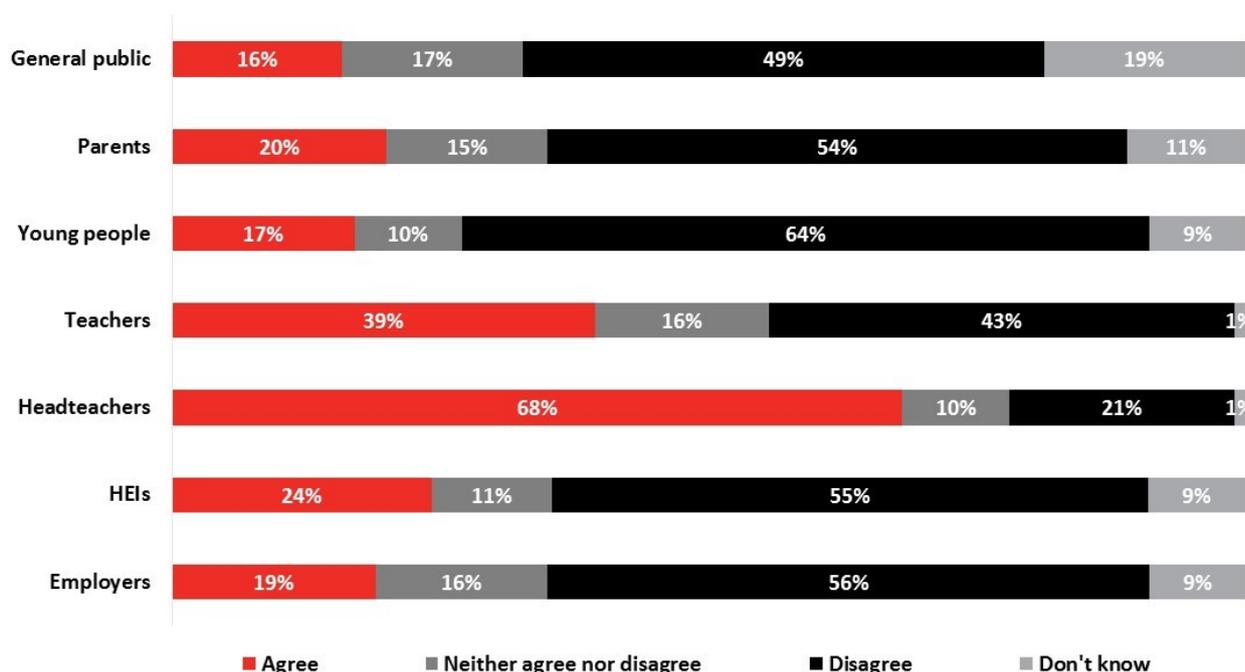
### 9 New 9-1 grading scale

9.1.1 Headteachers were significantly more likely than all other groups to understand the new 9-1 grading scale to be used in new GCSEs. Sixty eight per cent of headteachers were in agreement that they understood the new GCSE grading scale compared to a fifth (21 per cent) who disagreed. In comparison, a similar proportion of teachers disagreed (43 per cent) or agreed (39 per cent) that they understood the new 9-1 grading scale to be used in new GCSEs.

9.1.2 There was a lack of understanding of the new 9-1 grading scale from all other groups. Young people were clear in their disagreement, with 64 per cent of young people reporting they disagreed that they understood the new grading scale, significantly higher than the level of disagreement from all other groups apart from employers.

9.1.3 The general public were significantly more likely than any other group to be unable to say if they agreed or disagreed whether they understood the new 9-1 grading scale for new GCSEs – with 19 per cent reporting they did not know.

Figure 9: ‘I understand the new 9-1 grading scale to be used in new GCSEs’



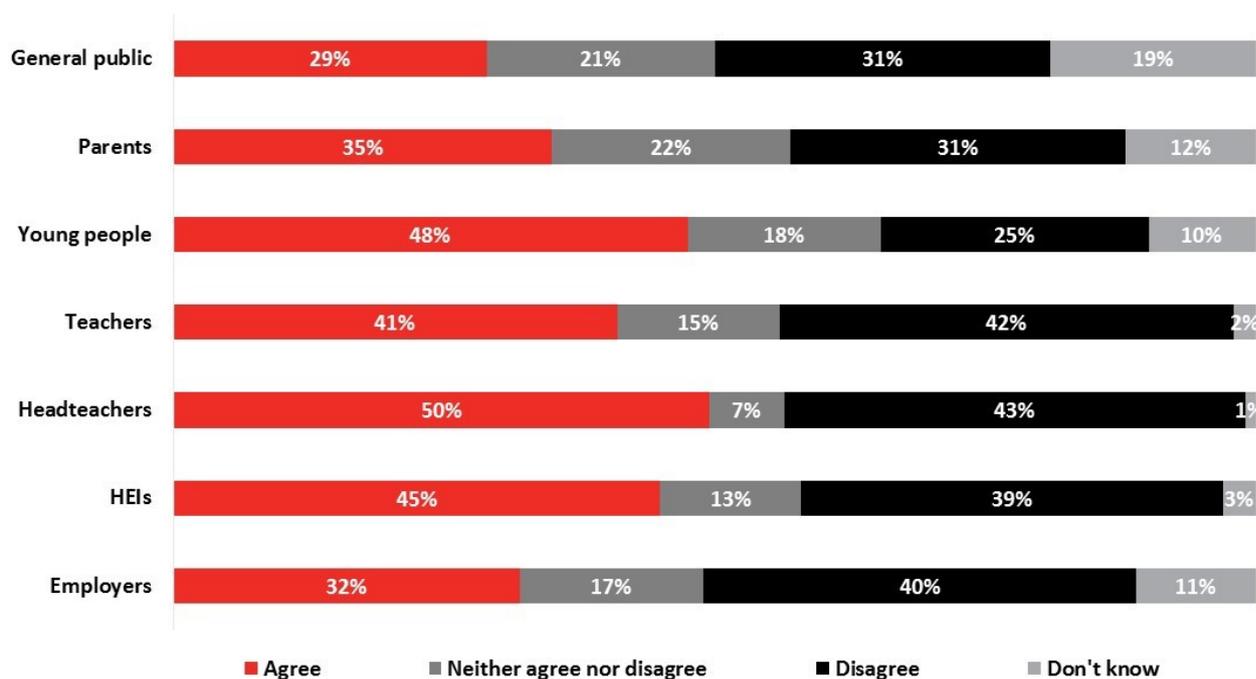
Effective base: All respondents (Nat rep n=998; Parents n=352; Young people n=313; Teachers n=526; Headteachers n=227; HEIs n=259; Employers n=210)

## 10 Linear end of course assessments

10.1.1 Young people were more likely to agree than disagree that the move to linear end of course assessment is a bad thing at GCSE. In contrast employers were more likely to disagree than agree that the move to linear end of course assessment is a bad thing at GCSE. Other groups offered similar levels of agreement and disagreement.

10.1.2 Half of headteachers (50 per cent) reported that they agreed that the move to linear end of course assessment is a bad thing at GCSE, with a further 43 per cent disagreeing. While this was not a statistically significant difference the level of agreement indicates that headteachers have concerns over the move to linear end of course assessment.

Figure 10: ‘The move to linear end of course assessment is a bad thing at GCSE’



Effective base: All respondents (Nat rep n=998; Parents n=352; Young people n=313; Teachers n=526; Headteachers n=227; HEIs n=259; Employers n=210)

## 11 Tiering

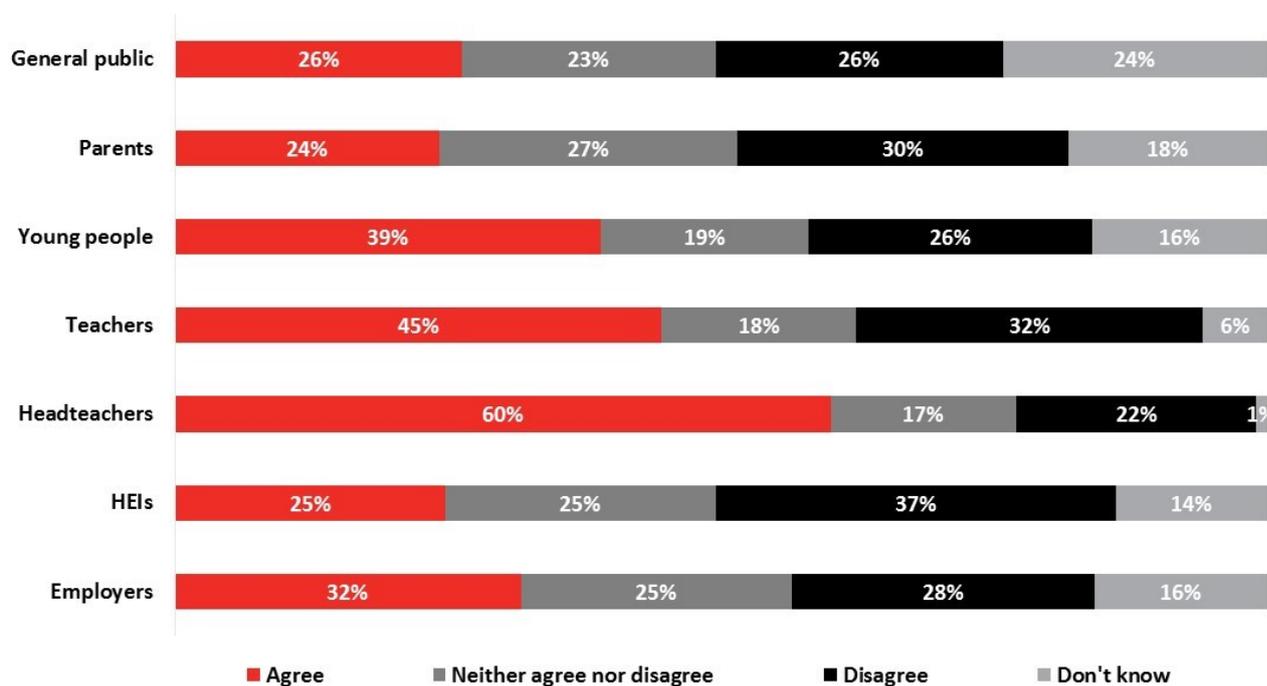
11.1.1 Headteachers, teachers and young people were more likely to agree than disagree that the removal of tiering (where possible) is a bad thing. However, amongst the general public, parents, HEIs and employers there is a sizeable proportion who neither agreed nor disagreed or did not know.

11.1.2 Six out of ten (60 per cent) headteachers agreed that the removal of tiering (where possible) is a bad thing. Significantly higher than the level of agreement from any other group.

11.1.3 HEIs were clearer in their disagreement that the removal of tiering (where possible) is a bad thing. Only a quarter of HEIs (25%) agreed that the removal of tiering is a bad thing compared with 37 per cent who disagreed.

11.1.4 Views from parents, employers and the general public were much more mixed with no consensus as to whether the removal of tiering (where possible) was a bad thing.

Figure 11: ‘The removal of tiering (where possible) is a bad thing’



Effective base: All respondents (Nat rep n=998; Parents n=352; Young people n=313; Teachers n=526; Headteachers n=227; HEIs n=259; Employers n=210)

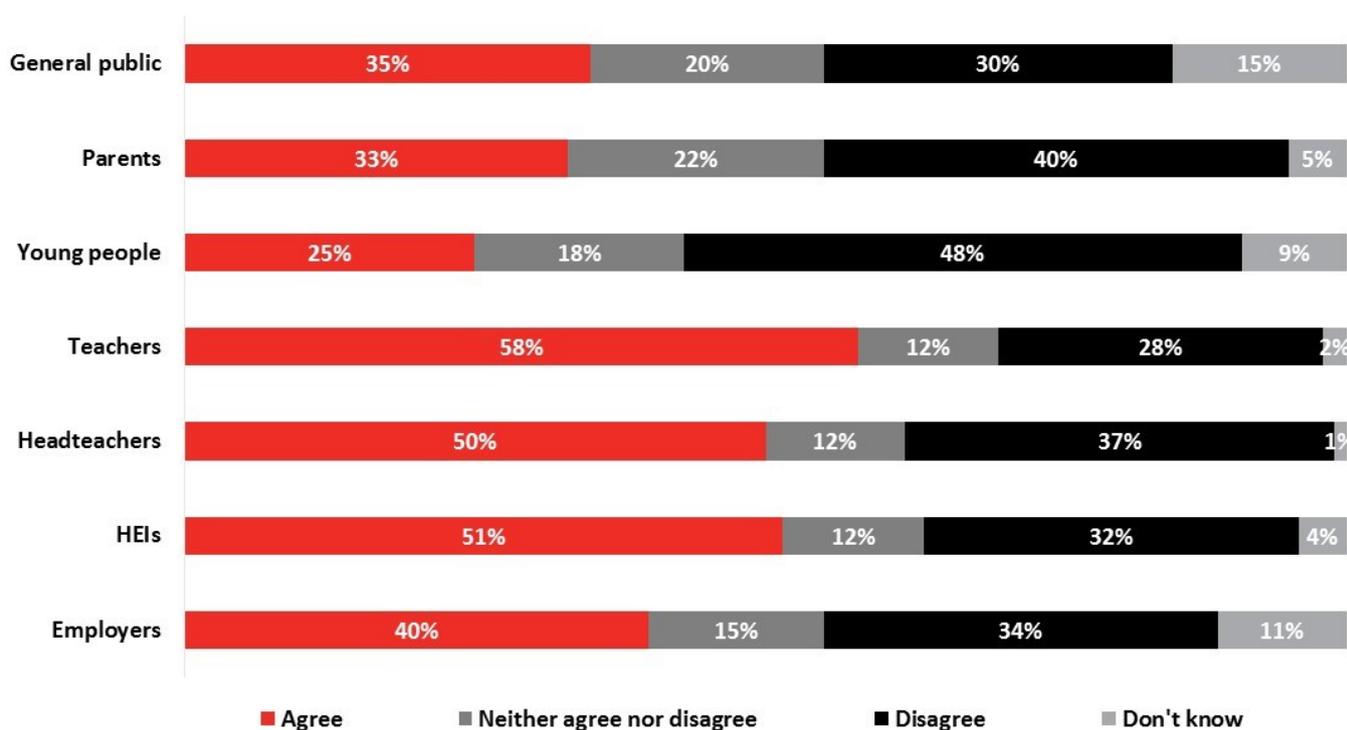
## 12 Teacher assessment

12.1.1 Teachers, headteachers and HEIs were strongest in their agreement that the reduction in teacher assessment in GCSE is a good thing. In contrast, young people were significantly more likely than any other group to disagree that the reduction in teacher assessment in GCSE is a good thing.

12.1.2 Six out of ten teachers (58 per cent) agreed that the reduction in teacher assessment in GCSE is a good thing, with 28 per cent who disagreed. A fifth of teachers (20 per cent) strongly agreed that the reduction in teacher assessment in GCSE is a good thing – significantly higher than the proportions that strongly agreed from any other sample group.

12.1.3 While the general public were slightly more likely to agree than disagree that the reduction in teacher assessment in GCSE is a good thing, there were no real differences in opinion between parents and employers.

Figure 12: ‘The reduction in teacher assessment in GCSE is a good thing’



Effective base: All respondents (Nat rep n=998; Parents n=352; Young people n=313; Teachers n=526; Headteachers n=227; HEIs n=259; Employers n=210)

### Spotlight on headteachers

- Headteachers who responded to the survey from independent/private schools were significantly more likely than headteachers from academy/free schools to agree that GCSEs needed reform. Six in ten headteachers from independent/private schools (56 per cent) agreed that GCSEs needed reform compared with four out of ten headteachers from academy/free schools (37 per cent).
- Headteachers from academy/free schools who responded to the survey were significantly more likely than headteachers from independent/private schools to agree that:
  - The move to linear end of course assessment is a bad thing at GCSE than (Academy/free schools 58 per cent agreed and Independent/private 22 per cent agreed)

- The removal of tiering (where possible) is a bad thing (academy/free schools 66 per cent agreed and Independent/private 45 per cent agreed)
- Three out of four headteachers (74 per cent) from independent/private schools agreed that the reduction in teacher assessment in GCSE is a good thing – significantly higher than the 45 per cent of headteachers from academy/free schools who reported this (36 per cent).

### Spotlight on teachers

- Classroom teachers/lecturers were significantly more likely than heads of department/subjects to agree that GCSEs needed reform – 52 per cent compared with 39 per cent.
- Four out of ten (44 per cent) of GCSE teachers agreed that GCSEs needed reform on a par with the 37 per cent that disagreed – although this level of disagreement was significantly higher than the proportion of teachers who do not teach GCSEs (23 per cent) who disagreed that GCSEs needed reform.
- Two out of three teachers from independent/private schools (66 per cent) disagreed that the move to linear end of course assessment is a bad thing at GCSE – significantly higher than the level of disagreement from teachers in LA maintained schools (38 per cent), academies (41 per cent) and FE colleges (39 per cent).
- GCSE teachers were significantly more likely than teachers who do not teach GCSEs to agree that the removal of tiering (where possible) is a bad thing – 49 per cent compared with 30 per cent.
- Seven out of ten teachers from independent/private schools (67 per cent) disagreed that the reduction in teacher assessment in GCSE is a good thing – significantly higher than the level of disagreement from teachers in LA maintained schools (56 per cent) and academies (55 per cent).

### Spotlight on young people

- One in four young people aged 16-17 (25 per cent) agreed they understand the new 9-1 grading scale to be used in new GCSEs – significantly higher than the proportion of 14-15 year olds (14 per cent) and 18-19 year olds (13 per cent) who reported this.

- Girls were significantly more likely than boys to agree that the move to linear end of course assessment is a bad thing at GCSE – 54 per cent compared with 42 per cent.
- One in two young people aged 16-17 (51 per cent) agreed they understand the removal of tiering (where possible) is a bad thing – significantly higher than the proportion of 14-15 year olds (33 per cent) and 18-19 year olds (35 per cent) who reported this.

## Section 3: Perceptions of A levels

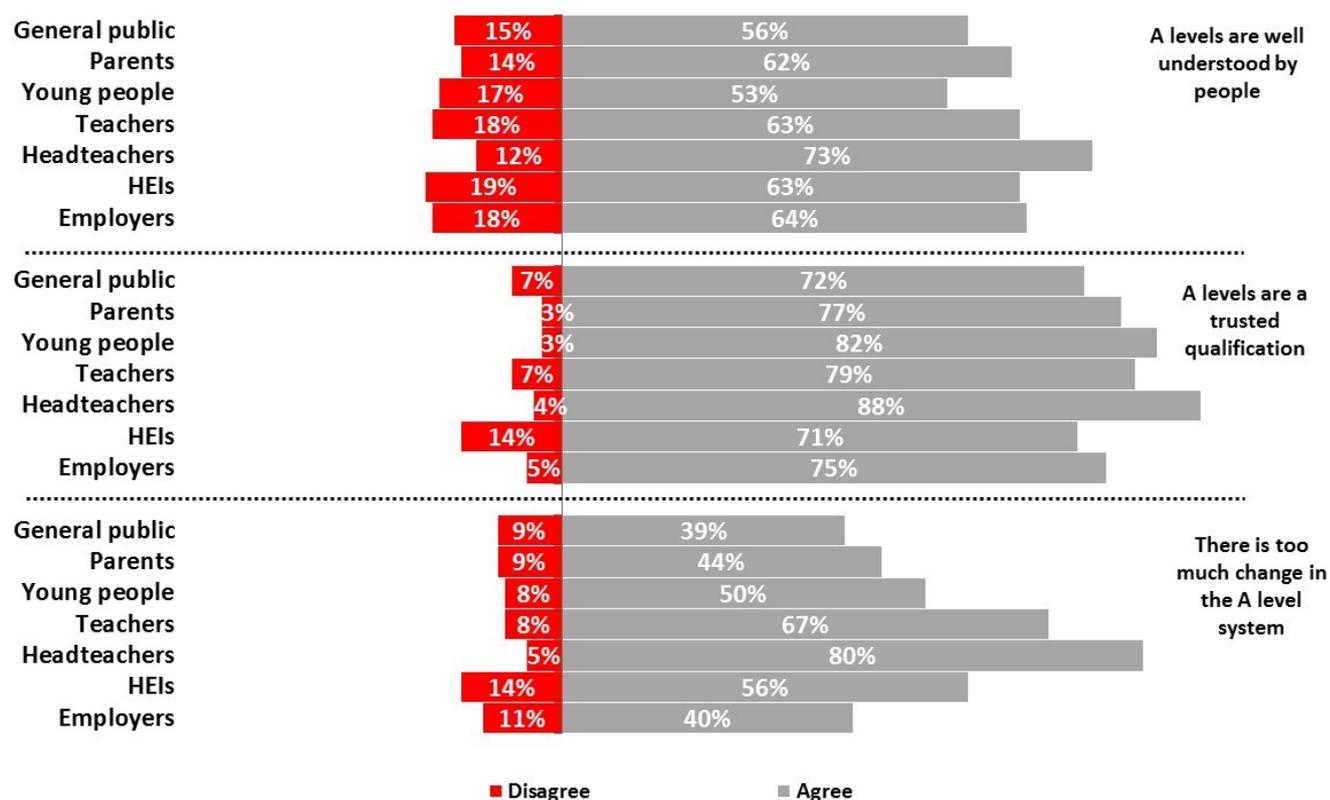
The third section of this report focuses on perceptions of A level qualifications.

### 13 Overall perceptions of A levels

13.1.1 There was consistent agreement that A levels are well understood by people with a majority of all groups in agreement with this. Headteachers were significantly more likely than all other groups to agree that A levels are well understood by people – 73 per cent stated this compared with 64 per of employers, 63 per cent of teachers and HEIs, 56 per cent of the general public and 53 per cent of young people.

13.1.2 Parents were far more likely than young people to agree that A levels are well understood (62 per cent compared with 53 per cent) as were employers (64 per cent) compared with the general public (56 per cent).

Figure 13: Overall perceptions of A levels



Effective base: All respondents (Nat rep n=998; Parents n=352; Young people n=313; Teachers n=526; Headteachers n=227; HEIs n=259; Employers n=210)

- 13.1.3 Levels of trust in A level qualifications were high, with a majority of all groups in agreement that A levels are a trusted qualification. With the exception of young people, headteachers were significantly more likely than all other groups to agree that A levels are a trusted qualification – 88 per cent stated this compared with 79 per cent of teachers, 77 per cent of parents, 75 per cent of employers, 72 per cent of the general public and 71 per cent of HEIs. Just over eight in ten (82 per cent) young people agreed that A levels are a trusted qualification.
- 13.1.4 At the other end of the spectrum, HEIs were significantly more likely than all other groups to disagree that A levels are a trusted qualification – 14 per cent stated this compared with seven per cent of teachers and the general public, five per cent of employers, four per cent of headteachers and three per cent of parents and young people.
- 13.1.5 The findings reported here that the A level qualification is ‘trusted’ and ‘well understood’ by people are in line with the previous wave of this research that established that the strengths of the A level qualification were that it was a “trusted qualification” and “well understood by people”.
- 13.1.6 With regards to change within the A level system, both headteachers and teachers were more likely to agree that there is too much change within the system, with headteachers significantly more likely to agree than teachers (80 per cent compared with 67 per cent). Other groups were considerably less likely to agree - 56 per cent of HEIs, 50 per cent of young people, 44 per cent of parents, 40 per cent of employers and 39 per cent of the general public.
- 13.1.7 While not asked in a directly comparable way the findings reported here corroborate previous waves of this research. The previous wave 12 of this research identified that “constant change in the exam system” was the most frequently reported concern about the A level system by headteachers, teachers, students, parents and the public.

### **Spotlight on teachers**

- Teachers who taught A levels were more likely than those who do not teach A levels to agree that A levels are well understood by people – 68 per cent compared with 56 per cent.
- Levels of trust in A levels were consistently high across those who teach different types of qualification, although teachers who teach A levels were more likely than those who do not teach A levels to agree that A levels are a trusted qualification – 83 per cent compared with 75 per cent.

- Teachers who teach A levels were far more likely to agree than those who do not teach A levels that there is too much change in the A level system. Just under eight in ten (78 per cent) of those teaching A levels stated this compared with 52 per cent of those who do not teach A levels.
- Heads of departments/ subjects were also far more likely to agree, with 72 per cent stating there was too much change compared with 55 per cent of other teaching staff.
- Those working in academy/ free or maintained schools were significantly more likely than teachers working in community schools to agree that there was too much change in the system – 72 per cent and 64 per cent compared with 58 per cent respectively.

### **Spotlight on young people**

- 16 to 19 year olds were almost twice as likely as 14 to 15 year olds to agree that there has been too much change in the system – 63 per cent of 16 to 17s and 56 per cent of 18 to 19s compared with 30 per cent of 14 to 15 year olds.

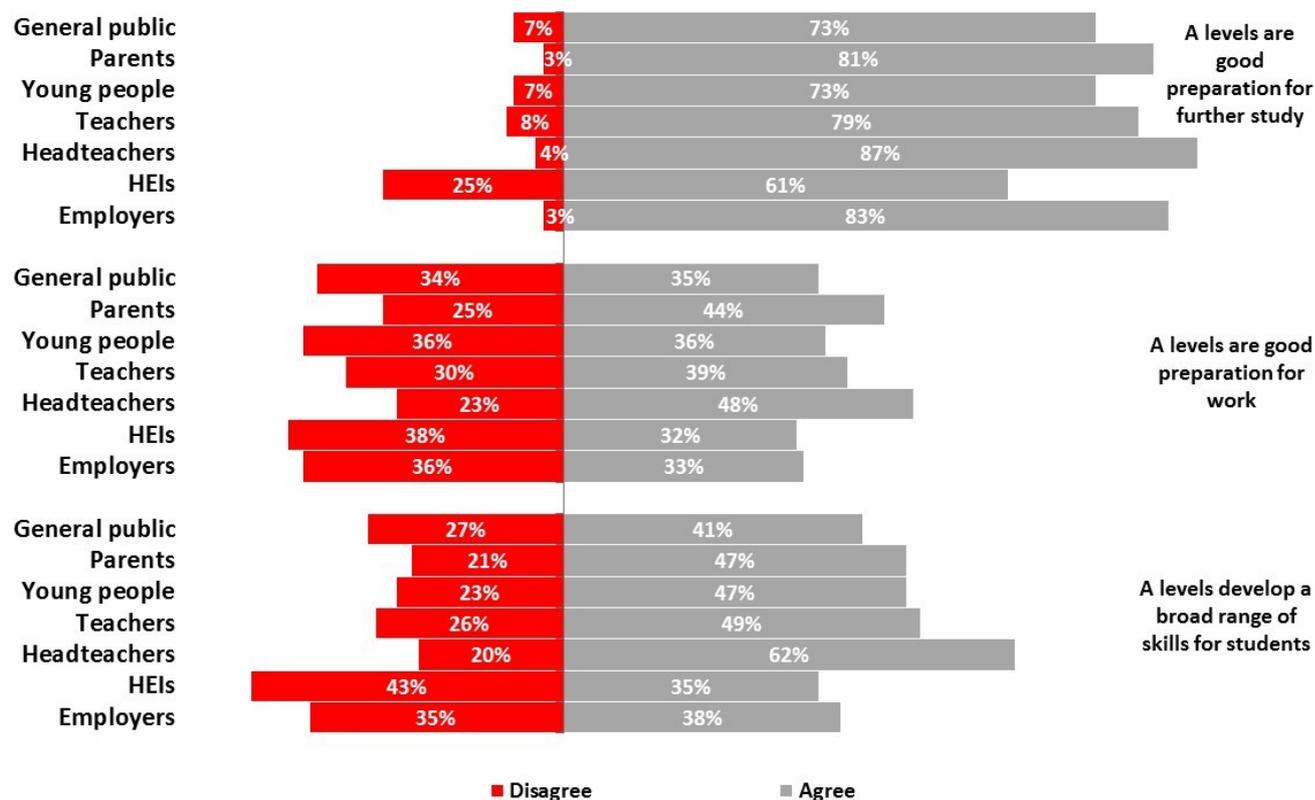
## **14 Skills and preparation**

14.1.1 Respondents were asked to provide their perceptions of whether A levels develop a good range of skills for students and whether A levels are good preparation for further study or work.

14.1.2 HEIs were significantly more likely than all other groups to disagree that A levels are good preparation for further study – 25 per cent stated this compared with eight per cent of teachers, seven per cent of young people and the general public, four per cent of headteachers, and three per cent of parents and employers.

14.1.3 As figure 14 shows, a majority of all groups (including HEIs) agreed that A levels are good preparation for further study. Headteachers (87 per cent), employers (83 per cent), parents (81 per cent) and teachers (79 per cent) were strongest in their agreement. These groups were significantly more likely than young people (73 per cent), the general public (73 per cent) and HEIs (61 per cent) to agree that A levels are good preparation for further study.

Figure 14: Skills and preparation



Effective base: All respondents (Nat rep n=998; Parents n=352; Young people n=313; Teachers n=526; Headteachers n=227; HEIs n=259; Employers n=210)

14.1.4 Views were more mixed as to whether A levels are good preparation for work, with no majority consensus that A levels are good preparation for work or not from any group. Headteachers, teachers and parents were strongest in their agreement that A levels are good preparation for work. All were more likely to agree than disagree that A levels are good preparation for work.

14.1.5 As figure 14 shows, headteachers were significantly more likely than all other groups to agree A levels develop a broad range of skills for students – 62 per cent stated this compared with 49 per cent of teachers, 47 per cent of young people and parents, 41 per cent of the general public, 38 per cent of employers and 35 per cent of HEIs.

14.1.6 Respondents from the general public, parents, young people and teachers were all more likely to agree than disagree that A levels develop a broad range of skills for students.

14.1.7 In contrast, both HEIs and employers were most likely to disagree that A levels develop a broad range of skills for students, with 43 per cent of HEIs and 35 per cent of employers stating this compared with 27 per cent of the general public, 26 per cent of teachers, 23 per cent of young people, 21 per cent of parents and 20 per cent of headteachers.

### **Spotlight on teachers**

- Teachers who teach A levels were more likely than those who do not teach A levels to agree A levels develop a broad range of skills for students – 58 per cent compared with 38 per cent.
- Teachers within maintained and academy/ free schools were also more likely to agree that A levels are good preparation for further study than teachers in independent/ private schools (80 per cent and 81 per cent compared with 70 per cent).
- Teachers within FE colleges were more likely to disagree than those in independent/ private and academy/ free schools that A levels are good preparation for work – 39 per cent compared with 21 per cent and 25 per cent.

### **Spotlight on young people**

- Girls who responded to the survey were more likely than boys to disagree that A levels are good preparation for further study (10 per cent compared with four per cent). 18 to 19 year olds are also more likely to disagree than 14 to 15 year olds (13 per cent compared with one per cent).
- 16 to 19 year olds were more likely than 14 to 15 year olds to disagree that A levels are good preparation for work – 52 per cent of 18 to 19s and 39 per cent of 16 to 17s compared with 16 per cent of 14 to 15 year olds.
- Girls were more likely than boys to agree A levels develop a broad range of skills for students – 53 per cent compared with 42 per cent. Older young people were more likely than younger ones however to disagree with this (35 per cent of 18 to 19s and 27 per cent of 16 to 17s compared with seven per cent of 14 to 15s).

### **Spotlight on the general public**

- Men were more likely than women to disagree that A levels develop a broad range of skills for students (32 per cent compared with 22 per cent of women).

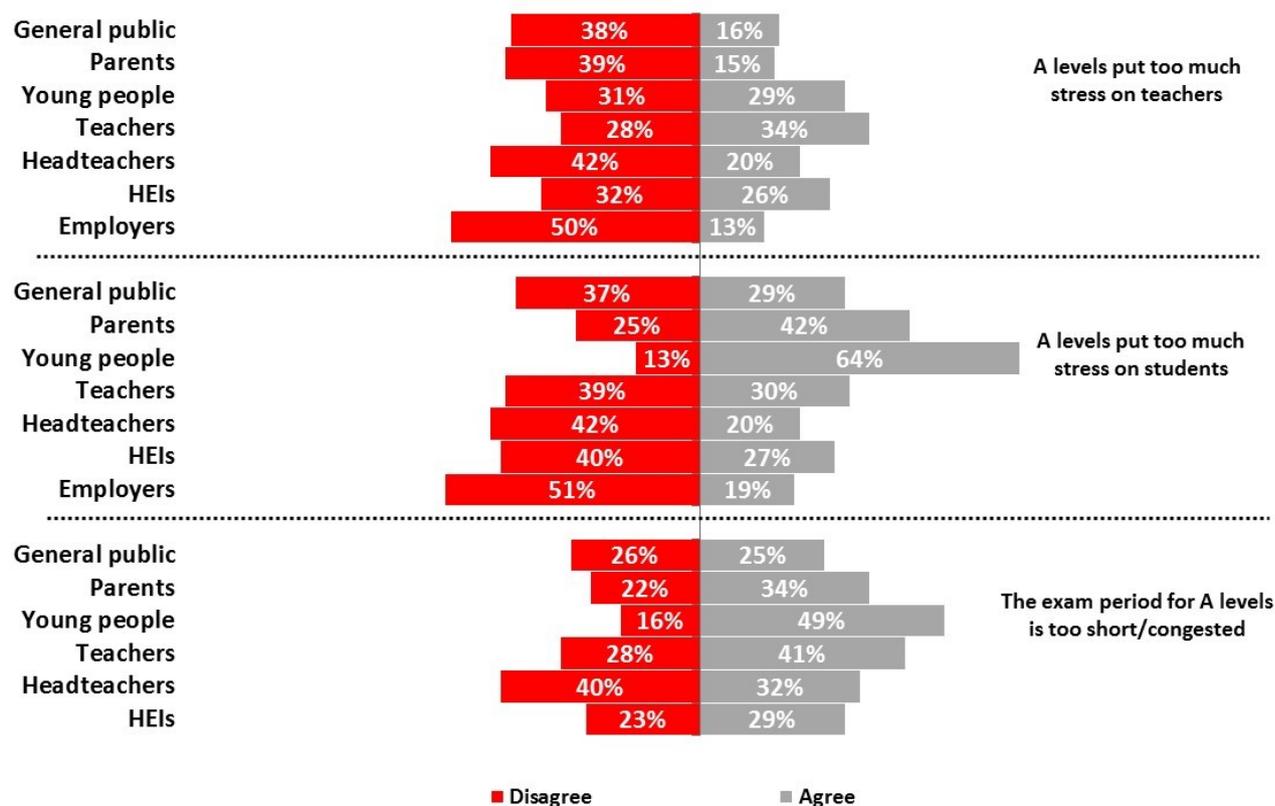
## **15 Stress and time constraints**

15.1.1 Views were mixed between respondent groups on the extent to which A levels put too much stress on teachers. Employers were strongest in their perceptions with one in two (50 per cent) disagreeing that A levels put too much stress on teachers – significantly higher than the 13 per cent of employers who agreed.

15.1.2 Headteachers (42 per cent), parents (39 per cent) and the general public (38 per cent) were also significantly more likely to disagree than agree that A levels put too much stress on teachers.

15.1.3 In contrast, teachers were significantly more likely than all other groups (with the exception of young people) to agree that A levels put too much stress on teachers – 34 per cent of teachers stated this compared with 26 per cent of HEIs, 20 per cent of headteachers, 16 per cent of the general public, 15 per cent of parents and 13 per cent of employers.

Figure 15: Stress related to A levels and the exam period



Effective base: All respondents (Nat rep n=998; Parents n=352; Young people n=313; Teachers n=526; Headteachers n=227; HEIs n=259; Employers n=210)

15.1.4 With regards to perceptions of stress that A levels place on students, young people were significantly more likely than all other groups to agree that A levels put too much stress on students. Parents were most likely to support the view of young people, with four out of ten (42 per cent) in agreement that A levels place too much stress on students.

15.1.5 All other groups were significantly more likely to disagree than agree that A levels put too much stress on students. Employers were most likely to disagree that A levels put too much stress on students with over half (51 per cent) stating this.

15.1.6 As with the findings relevant to GCSEs, the findings in this wave of the perceptions study echo the two previous years where students were concerned about “too much pressure / stress” placed on them by A levels. In previous waves this issue was a recurrent concern raised by parents and, to a lesser extent, members of the public. Wave 13 found that teachers were also concerned about “too much pressure / stress on teachers” – a finding corroborated in this wave.

15.1.7 In common with the findings about the stress that A levels place on students, young people were again significantly more likely than all other groups to agree the exam period for A levels is too short/ congested – 49 per cent compared with 41 per cent of teachers, 34 per cent of parents, 29 per cent of HEIs and 25 per cent of the general public.

15.1.8 At the other end of the spectrum, headteachers were significantly more likely than all other groups to disagree that the exam period for A levels is too short/ congested – 40 per cent compared with 28 per cent of teachers, 26 per cent of the general public, 23 per cent of HEIs, 22 per cent of parents and 16 per cent of young people.

### Spotlight on teachers

- Teachers who teach A levels were more likely than those who do not teach A levels to disagree that A levels put too much stress on teachers – 35 per cent compared with 19 per cent.
- Teachers in independent/ private schools were also more likely to disagree that A levels put too much stress on teachers – 45 per cent compared with 28 per cent in academies/ free schools, 25 per cent in maintained and community schools and 24 per cent in FE colleges.
- Teachers who teach A levels were more likely than those who do not teach A levels to disagree that A levels put too much stress on students – 48 per cent compared with 28 per cent.

### Spotlight on young people

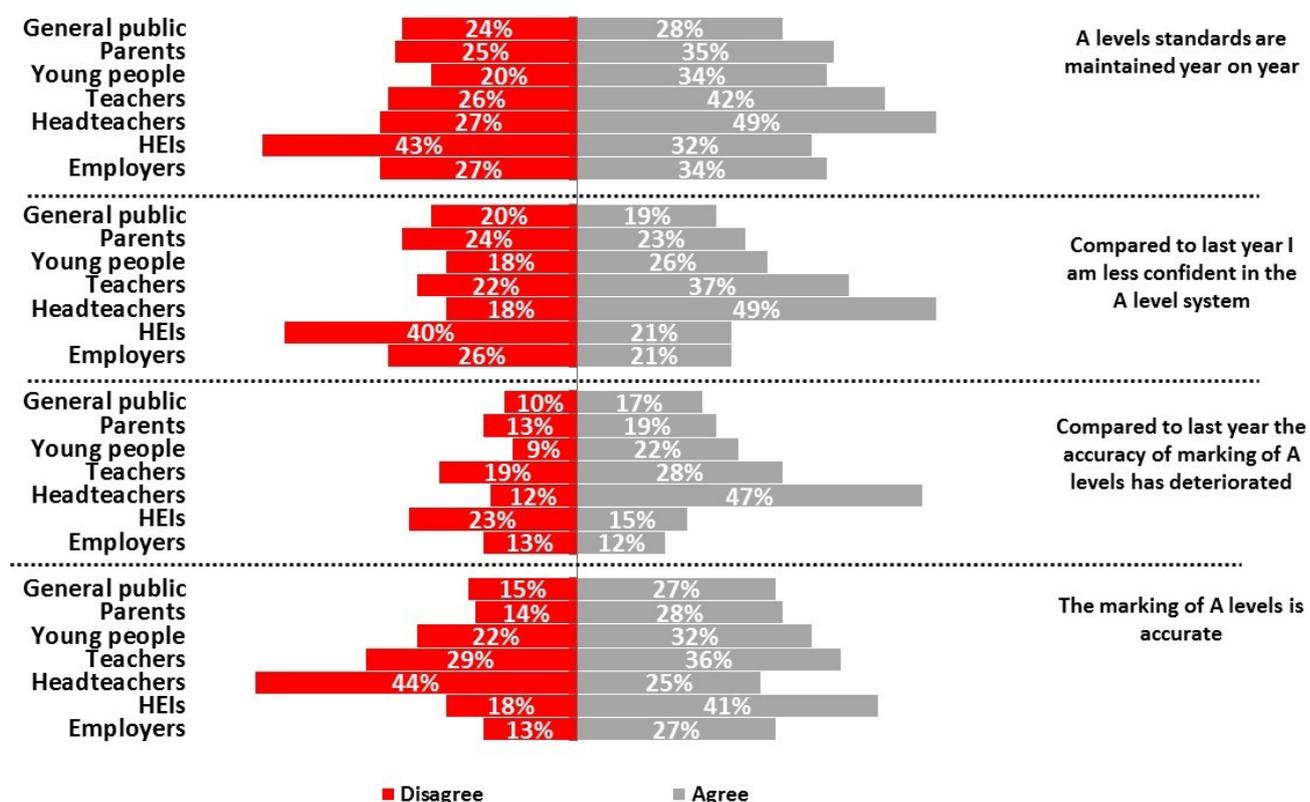
- 16 to 19 year olds were more likely than 14 to 15 year olds to agree that:
  - A levels put too much stress on teachers – 40 per cent of 16 to 17s and 35 per cent of 18 to 19s compared with 13 per cent of 14 to 15s
  - A levels put too much stress on students – 78 per cent of 16 to 17s and 66 per cent of 18 to 19s compared with 49 per cent of 14 to 15s
  - The exam period for A levels is too short/congested - 61 per cent of 16 to 17s and 57 per cent of 18 to 19s compared with 29 per cent of 14 to 15s
- Girls were more likely than boys to agree A levels put too much stress on students – 70 per cent compared with 58 per cent of boys.

## 16 Confidence in A levels

16.1.1 Headteachers were significantly more likely than all other groups to agree that A level standards are maintained year on year – 49 per cent compared with 42 per cent of teachers, 35 per cent of parents, 34 per cent of young people and employers and 32 per cent of HEIs.

16.1.2 At the other end of the spectrum, HEIs were most likely to disagree that A level standards are maintained year on year – 43 per cent compared with 27 per cent of headteachers and employers, 26 per cent of teachers, 25 per cent of parents, 24 per cent of the general public and 20 per cent of young people.

Figure 16: Confidence in the A level system



Effective base: All respondents (Nat rep n=998; Parents n=352; Young people n=313; Teachers n=526; Headteachers n=227; HEIs n=259; Employers n=210)

16.1.3 In contrast to their view that A level standards are maintained, headteachers were significantly more likely than all other groups to agree that compared to last year the accuracy of marking of A levels has deteriorated – 47 per cent compared with 28 per cent of teachers, 22 per cent of young people, 19 per cent of parents, 17 per cent of the general public, 15 per cent of HEIs and 12 per cent of employers.

- 16.1.4 With the exception of teachers, HEIs were more likely than all other groups to disagree that compared with last year the accuracy of marking of A levels has deteriorated – 23 per cent compared with 13 per cent of parents and employers, 12 per cent of headteachers, 10 per cent of the general public and nine per cent of young people.
- 16.1.5 Following the trend of headteachers' negativity around the deterioration of the accuracy of A level marking, headteachers were also significantly more likely than all other groups to disagree that the marking of A levels is accurate – 44 per cent compared with 29 per cent of teachers, 22 per cent of young people, 18 per cent of HEIs, 15 per cent of the general public, 14 per cent of parents and 13 per cent of employers.
- 16.1.6 With the exception of teachers, HEIs were more likely than all other groups to agree that the marking of A levels is accurate – 41 per cent compared with 32 per cent of young people, 28 per cent of parents, 27 per cent of employers and the general public and 25 per cent of headteachers.
- 16.1.7 The finding that headteachers have concerns over the accuracy of the marking of A levels follows the findings of wave 12 of this research in which headteachers reported the lowest levels of confidence in the grading and marking of A levels.
- 16.1.8 Taking into account perceptions of A level standards and accuracy of the marking of A levels we find that headteachers were significantly more likely than all other groups to agree that compared with last year they are less confident in the A level system.
- 16.1.9 Teachers also supported headteachers' perceptions with four out of ten (37 per cent) in agreement that compared with last year they are less confident in the A level system, significantly higher than the two out of ten (22 per cent) who disagreed.
- 16.1.10 At the other end of the spectrum, HEIs were most likely to disagree that compared with last year they are less confident in the A level system – 40 per cent compared with 26 per cent of employers, 24 per cent of parents, 22 per cent of teachers, 20 per cent of the general public and 18 per cent of young people and headteachers.
- 16.1.11 Although asked in a different way and not directly comparable to the previous wave 12, this indicates an increase in those reporting they are less confident in the A level system.

### **Spotlight on teachers**

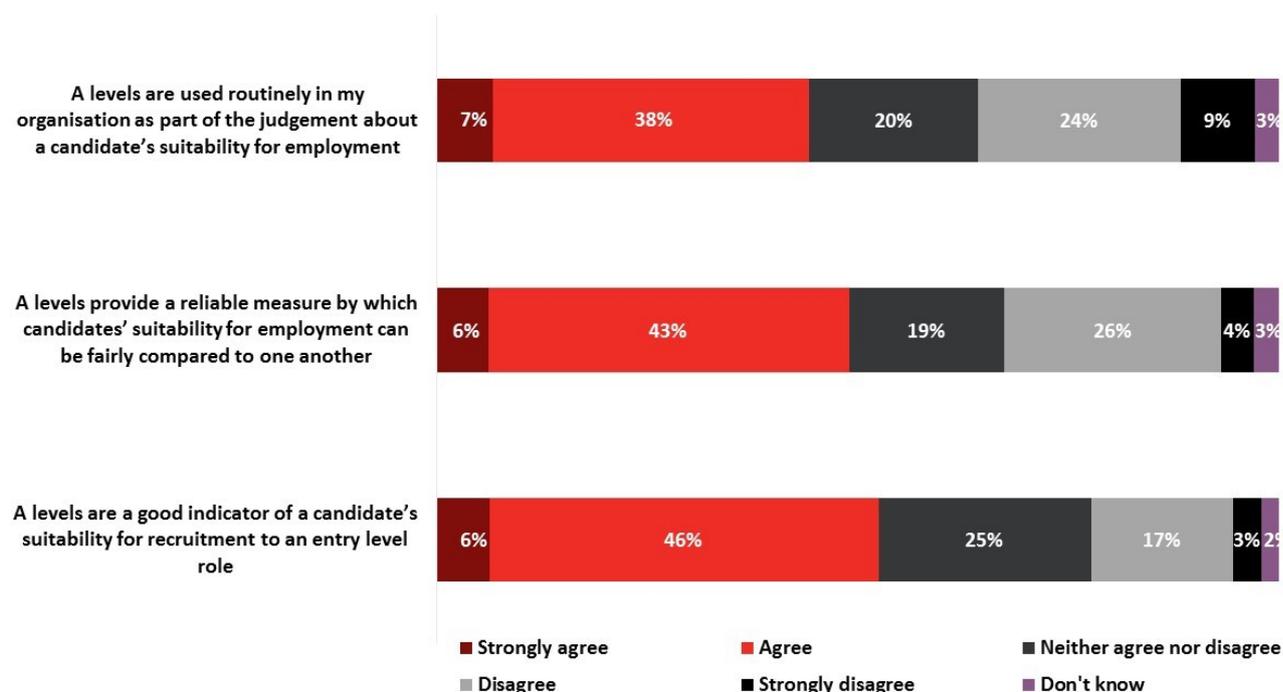
- Heads of departments/ subjects were significantly more likely than classroom/ subject teachers to agree that A level standards are maintained year on year – 47 per cent compared with 37 per cent.
- Those teaching A levels were significantly more likely than those who do not teach A levels to agree that:
  - A level standards are maintained year on year – 48 per cent compared with 33 per cent
  - The marking of A levels is accurate – 41 per cent compared with 30 per cent
  - Compared with last year I am less confident in the A level system – 44 per cent compared with 27 per cent
  - Compared with last year the accuracy of marking of A levels has deteriorated – 34 per cent compared with 20 per cent
- Teachers working within academies/ free schools were significantly more likely than those working in independent/ private schools and maintained schools to agree A level standards are maintained year on year – 48 per cent compared with 32 per cent and 38 per cent.
- Teachers within independent/ private schools were significantly more likely to disagree than those in maintained and academy/ free schools that the marking of A levels is accurate – 42 per cent compared with 28 per cent and 25 per cent respectively.
- Teachers within independent/ private schools were significantly more likely to agree than those in academy/ free schools that compared with last year the accuracy of marking of A levels has deteriorated – 35 per cent compared with 24 per cent.

### **17 A levels and employment – employer perceptions**

- Just over four in ten (44 per cent) employers agreed that A levels are used routinely in their organisations as part of the judgement about a candidate's suitability for employment compared with a third (33 per cent) who disagreed.

- Larger organisations were significantly more likely to agree – 51 per cent of organisations with 250+ employees compared with 34 per cent of organisations with 2 to 249 employees.
- Just under one in two (49 per cent) employers agreed that A levels provide a reliable measure by which candidates’ suitability for employment can be fairly compared to one another – significantly higher than the three in ten (30 per cent) disagreed.
- Smaller organisations were significantly more likely than larger organisations to disagree – 38 per cent of organisations with 2 to 249 employees compared with 24 per cent of organisations with 250+ employees.
- One in two (52 per cent) employers agreed A levels are a good indicator of a candidate’s suitability for recruitment to an entry level role, significantly higher than the one in five (20 per cent) who disagreed.
- Larger organisations were again significantly more likely to agree – 60 per cent of organisations with 250+ employees compared with 41 per cent of organisations with 2 to 249 employees.

Figure 17: Candidate suitability

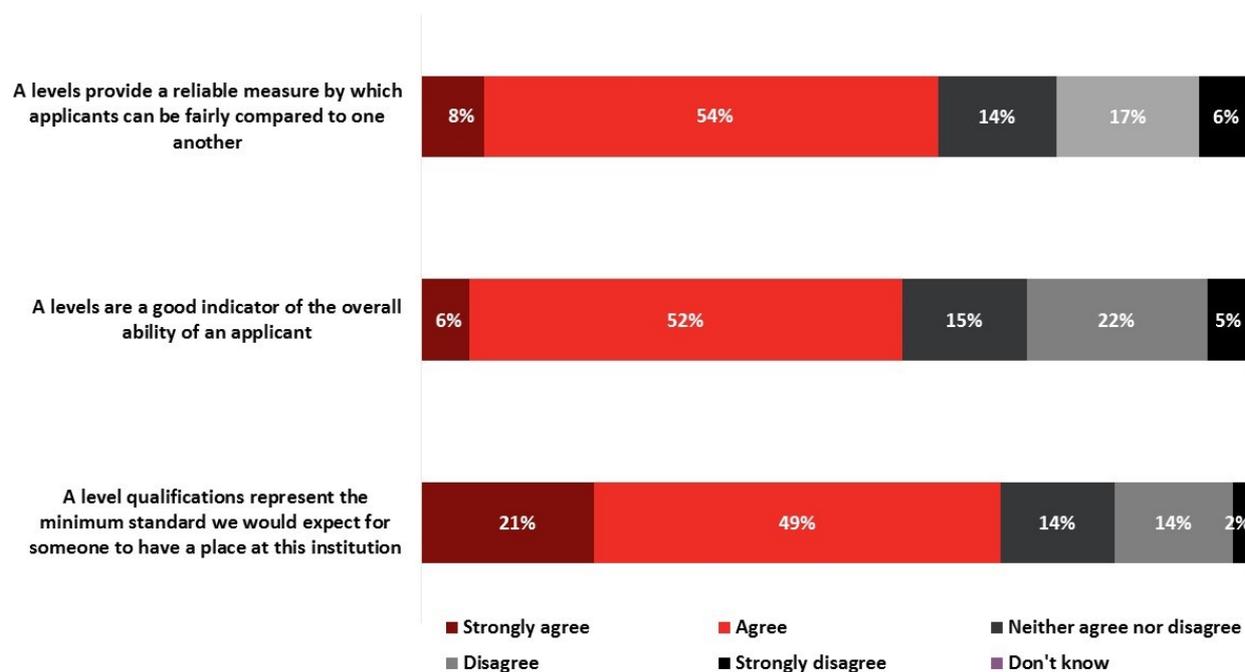


Effective base: All employers (n=210)

## 18 A levels and university applications – employer perceptions

- Six in ten (62 per cent) HEIs agreed that A levels provide a reliable measure by which applicants can be fairly compared to one another - one in four (24 per cent) disagreed.
- Just under six in ten (58 per cent) HEIs agreed that A levels are a good indicator of the overall ability of an applicant, significantly higher than the one in four (27 per cent) who disagreed.
- Seven in ten (70 per cent) HEIs agreed that A level qualifications represent the minimum standard we would expect for someone to have a place at this institution compared with one in six (17 per cent) who disagreed.

Figure 18: A levels and HE applications



Effective base: All HEIs (n=259)

## Section 4: Perceptions of A level reform

The fourth section of this report looks at perceptions around A level reform.

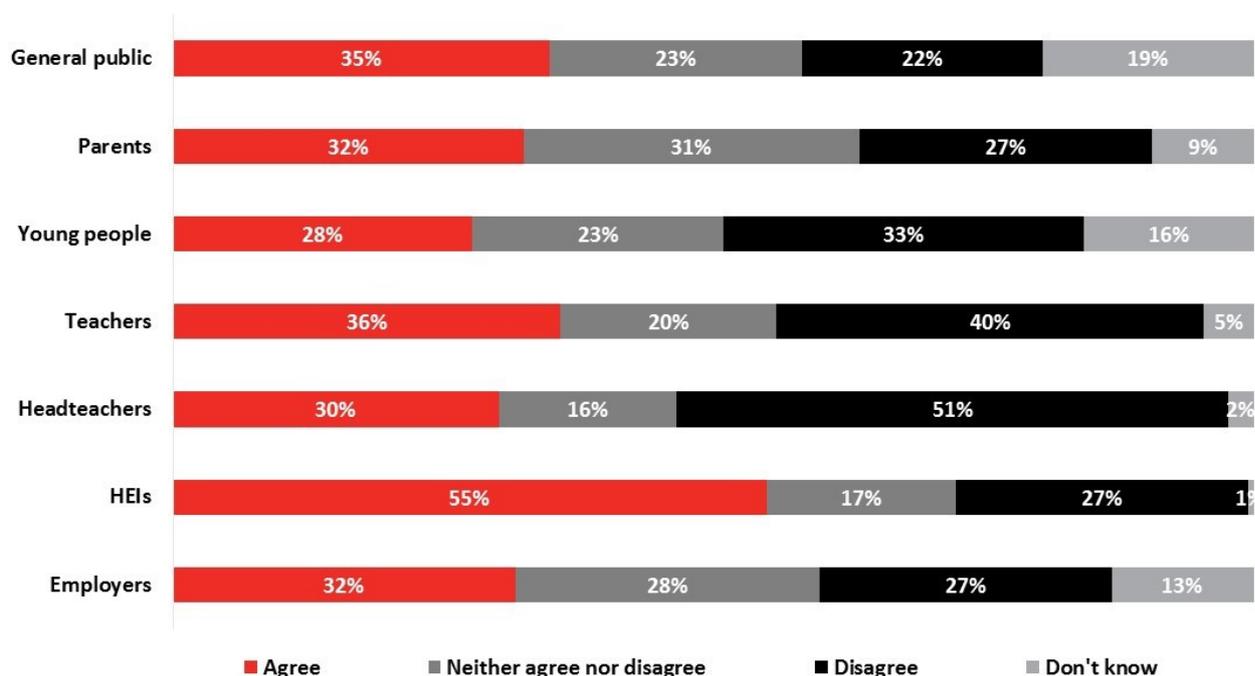
### 19 The need for A level reform

19.1.1 HEIs were significantly more likely than all other groups to feel that A levels needed reform, with more than half (55 per cent) in agreement. At the other end of the spectrum, young people were least likely to support the statement, with only roughly one quarter (28 per cent) indicating they agreed.

19.1.2 School staff were most stark in their disagreement with the suggestion that A levels needed reform; half of headteachers (51 per cent) and two in five teachers (40 per cent) disagreed that A levels needed reform.

19.1.3 Parents, employers and the general public were generally less opinionated on the matter, as they were more likely than HEIs and teachers to neither agree nor disagree that A levels needed reform (31 per cent among parents, 28 per cent among employers, and 23 per cent among the public).

Figure 19: 'A levels needed reform'



Effective base: All respondents (Nat rep n=998; Parents n=352; Young people n=313; Teachers n=526; Headteachers n=227; HEIs n=259; Employers n=210)

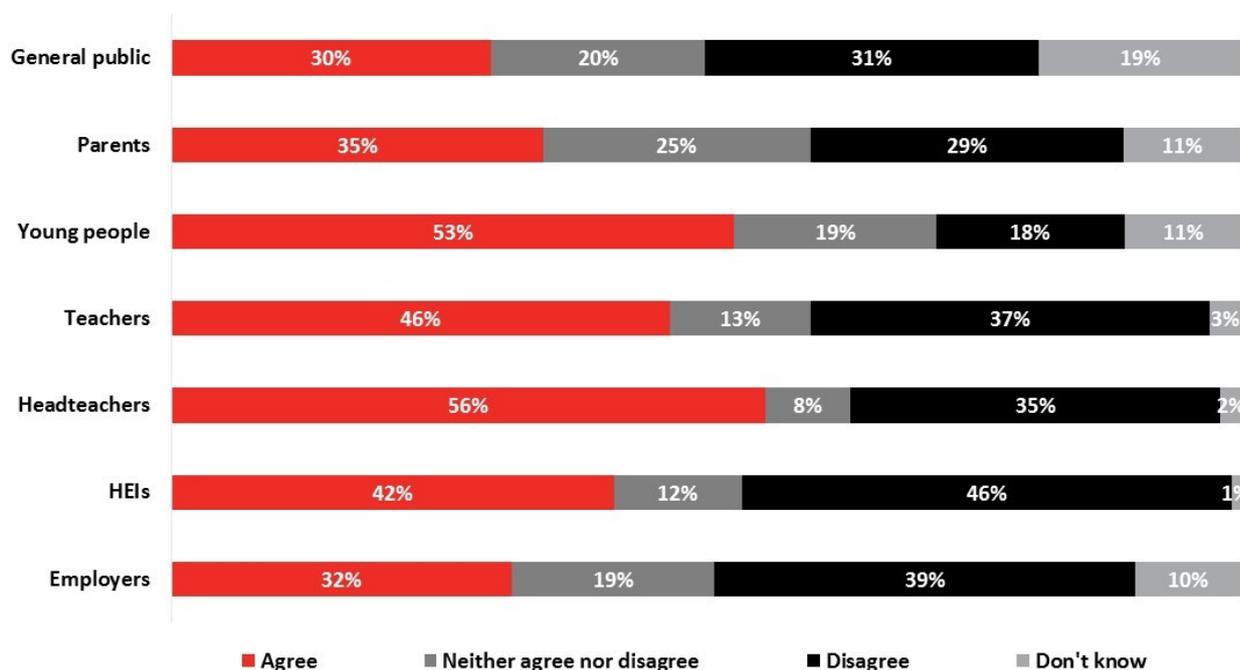
## 20 Linear end of course assessment

20.1.1 The groups closest to the school system – young people, teachers and headteachers – were most likely to feel the move to linear end of course assessment is a bad thing at A level, with close to half agreeing in each case (53 per cent among young people, 56 per cent among headteachers, and 46 per cent among teachers). Each of these groups were significantly more likely to agree than disagree that the move to linear end of course assessment is a bad thing at the A level.

20.1.2 There was uncertainty on this issue among HEIs, who were almost equally divided in their opinions on the suggestion that moving to linear end of course assessment at the A level is a bad thing, with 42 per cent agreeing and 46 per cent disagreeing.

20.1.3 Consistent with their perceptions of the general need for A level reform, parents, employers and the general public were also more likely to express uncertainty about the consequence of moving to linear end of course assessment, with relatively large proportions saying they neither agreed nor disagreed (25 per cent among parents, 19 per cent among employers, and 20 per cent among the general public).

Figure 20: ‘The move to linear, end of course assessment is a bad thing at A level’



Effective base: All respondents (Nat rep n=998; Parents n=352; Young people n=313; Teachers n=526; Headteachers n=227; HEIs n=259; Employers n=210)

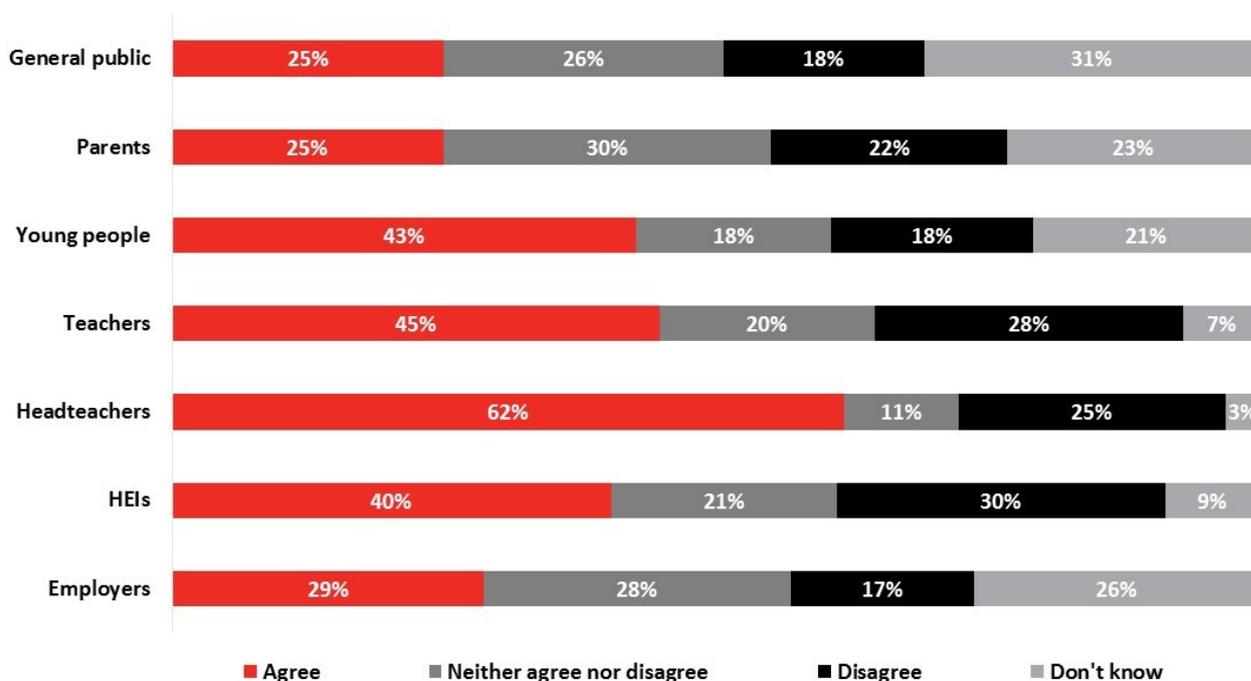
## 21 Decoupling the AS from the A level

21.1.1 By a significant margin, headteachers were more likely than any other group to feel that the disadvantages of decoupling the AS from the A level outweigh the advantages, with three in five stating they agreed with this statement (62 per cent). Among these individuals, more than one third (37 per cent) indicated they were in strong agreement.

21.1.2 While teachers were less convinced than headteachers that the disadvantages of decoupling the AS from the A level outweigh the advantages, nearly half (45 per cent) were still in agreement, as were similar proportions of young people (43 per cent) and HEIs (40 per cent). Teachers and young people were significantly more likely to agree than disagree that the disadvantages of decoupling the AS from the A level outweigh the advantages.

21.1.3 Parents, employers and the general public continued to be more likely to report a neutral stance on the issue of decoupling the AS from the A level. These groups were significantly more likely than teachers and headteachers to say that they neither agreed nor disagreed that the disadvantages of decoupling the AS from the A level outweigh the advantages (30 per cent among parents, 28 per cent among employers, and 26 per cent among the general public).

**Figure 21: ‘The disadvantages of decoupling the AS from the A level outweigh the advantages’**



Effective base: All respondents (Nat rep n=998; Parents n=352; Young people n=313; Teachers n=526; Headteachers n=227; HEIs n=259; Employers n=210)

## 22 The reduction in teacher assessment

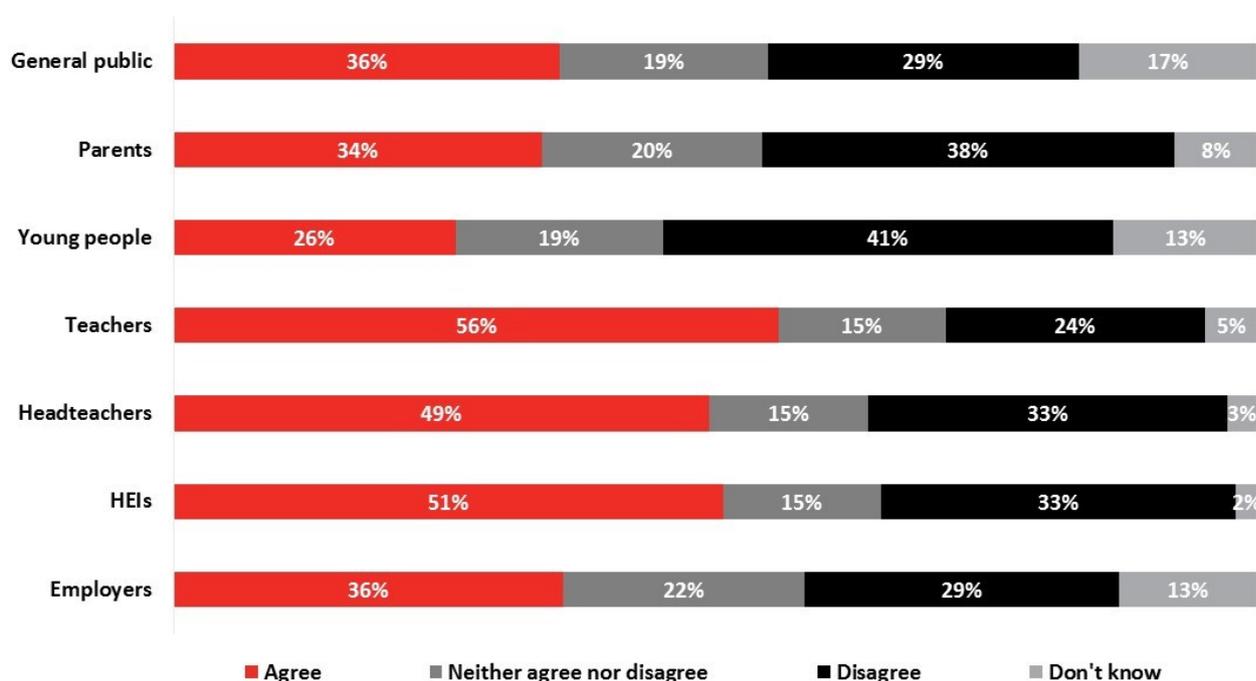
22.1.1 Teachers, headteachers and HEIs demonstrated the highest levels of agreement with the suggestion that the reduction in teacher assessment in some A level subjects is a good thing.

22.1.2 Teachers were the most likely to agree, with a majority (56 per cent) stating their support. Secondly, half of headteachers (49 per cent) and Higher Education institutions (51 per cent) also agreed that it's a good thing to reduce teacher assessment in some A level subjects.

22.1.3 Young people were significantly less likely than any other group to support the statement, with only a quarter (26 per cent) agreeing that this reduction is a good thing. Young people were significantly more likely to state that they disagreed (41 per cent).

22.1.4 Parents reported levels of disagreement very similar to those of young people, with 38 per cent saying they did not agree that it's a good thing to reduce teacher assessment in some A level subjects. They were, however, almost equally likely to state that they agreed (34 per cent).

Figure 22: 'The reduction in teacher assessment in some A level subjects is a good thing'



Effective base: All respondents (Nat rep n=998; Parents n=352; Young people n=313; Teachers n=526; Headteachers n=227; HEIs n=259; Employers n=210)

### Spotlight on headteachers

- Although base sizes are small and these results can only be indicative, headteachers at independent and private schools were significantly more

likely than those at maintained, academy and free schools to be supportive of A level reforms. More than half (52 per cent) agreed that A levels needed reform, compared with 26 per cent of headteachers at maintained schools and 20 per cent of those at academy and free schools.

### Spotlight on teachers

- Teachers who teach A level qualifications were considerably less supportive of A level reforms than those who do not teach A levels.
  - Nearly half (48 per cent) disagreed that A levels needed reform, compared with 28 per cent of those who do not teach A levels.
  - A level teachers also more commonly reported that moving to linear end of course assessment is a bad thing (53 per cent compared with 38 per cent among non-A level teachers), as well as that the disadvantages of decoupling the AS from the A level outweigh the advantages (54 per cent compared with 33 per cent).
- Department/subject heads were also more likely than other teaching staff to lack support for A level reforms. Just less than half (47 per cent) disagreed with the general statement that A levels needed reform, compared with 37 per cent of classroom/subject teachers and 16 per cent of other teaching staff.
- Teachers at independent/private schools were significantly more likely than those at most other types of schools to support A level reform. Overall, nearly half (46 per cent) agreed that A levels needed reform, compared with roughly one third of those at community (33 per cent), maintained (34 per cent), and academy/free schools (32 per cent).
- Teachers at independent/private schools were also much more likely to:
  - Disagree that the move to linear end of course assessment is a bad thing (55 per cent compared with 34 per cent among teachers at community and maintained schools and 37 per cent among those at academy/free schools).
  - Support the idea that the reduction in teacher assessment in some A level subjects is a good thing (71 per cent compared with 51 per cent among teachers at community schools and 54 per cent among those at maintained and academy/free schools).

## Section 5: Perceptions of alternative qualifications

The fifth section of this report focuses on perceptions of alternative qualifications.

### 23 Awareness of alternative qualifications

23.1.1 Figure 23 shows the level of awareness of different types of alternative qualifications amongst different groups. BTECs (Level 1/ Level 2) and BTECs (Level 3) have the highest level of awareness across all groups.

**Figure 23: Awareness of alternative qualifications by sample group**

	HEIS	YOUNG PEOPLE	HEADTEACHERS	TEACHERS	PARENTS	GENERAL PUBLIC	EMPLOYERS
BTECS (LEVEL 1/ LEVEL 2)	75%	73%	84%	85%	78%	68%	79%
BTECS (LEVEL 3)	83%	66%	78%	80%	70%	64%	78%
CAMBRIDGE NATIONALS (LEVEL 1/ LEVEL 2)	16%	13%	54%	30%	11%	8%	10%
CAMBRIDGE NATIONALS (LEVEL 3)	16%	11%	41%	25%	9%	7%	10%
INTERNATIONAL A LEVELS	51%	27%	37%	32%	21%	23%	26%
LEVEL 1/ LEVEL 2 CERTIFICATES (MORE COMMONLY KNOWN AS IGCSES)	30%	32%	78%	58%	24%	18%	20%
THE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE DIPLOMA PROGRAMME	83%	41%	65%	61%	41%	41%	54%
THE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE MIDDLE YEARS PROGRAMME	28%	13%	40%	19%	15%	9%	18%
THE PRE-U	24%	8%	49%	22%	8%	4%	7%
NONE OF THESE	4%	15%	4%	6%	14%	22%	12%

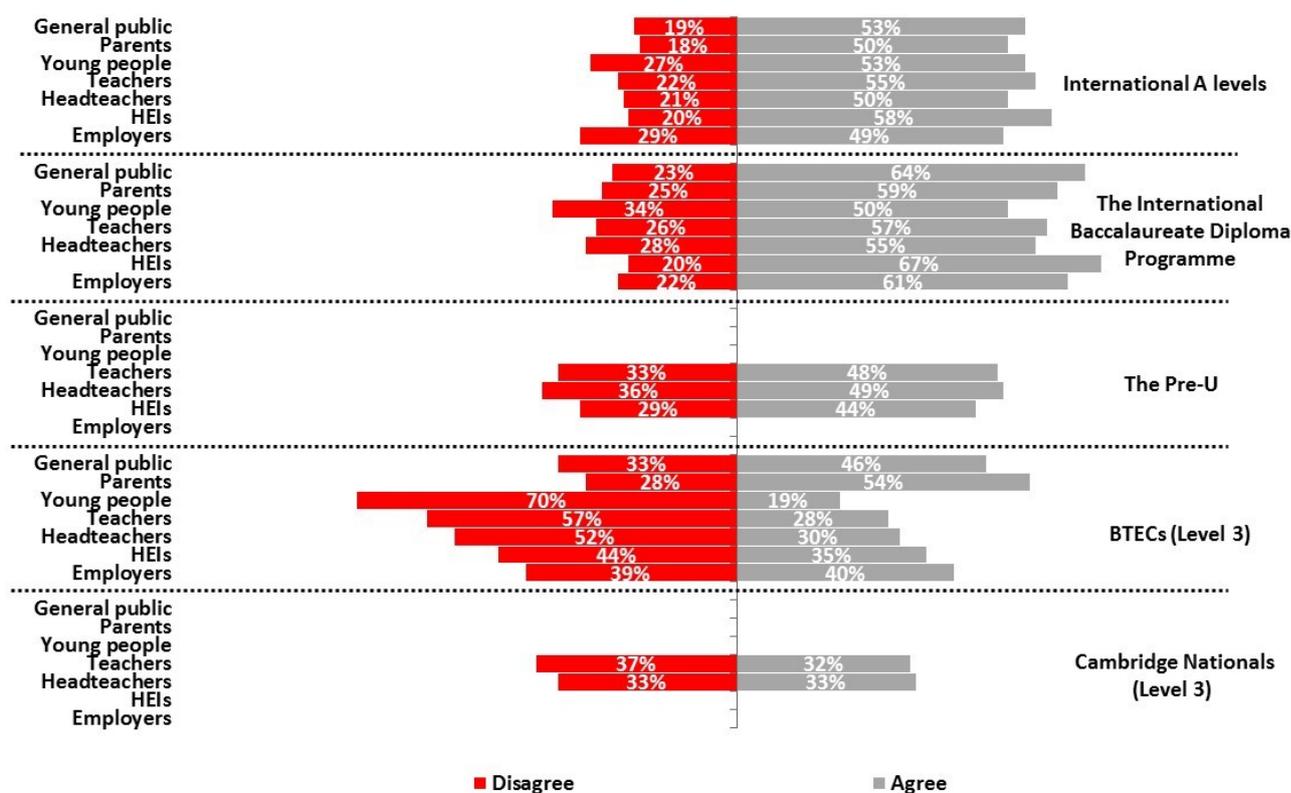
Effective base: All respondents (Nat rep n=998; Parents n=352; Young people n=313; Teachers n=526; Headteachers n=227; HEIs n=259; Employers n=210)

23.1.2 The awareness of different types of qualification was used to ask a list of questions about their challenge, preparation for further study and their value.

## 24 Equivalence of challenge of alternative qualifications compared with A levels

24.1.1 Figure 24 shows the level of agreement that different types of qualification are of equivalent challenge to A levels. Although these questions were only asked of those respondents who reported they were aware of these qualifications, a sizeable minority reported that they did not know if they agreed or disagreed with each statement. For this reason the data in the charts and text has been rebased to exclude ‘don’t knows’.

**Figure 24: Level of agreement and disagreement that alternative qualifications are of equivalent challenge to A levels**



Effective base: Varies for each statement based upon level of awareness from each sample group. Only sample groups with an effective base over 50 are shown

Note: Data rebased to exclude don't know.

24.1.2 International A levels and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme were most consistently considered of equivalent challenge to A levels.

24.1.3 A small majority of all sample groups (apart from employers) agreed that **International A levels** are of equivalent challenge to A levels. There were no significant differences by sample group.

- 24.1.4 The **International Baccalaureate Diploma** was also considered to be of equivalent challenge to A levels by a majority of HEIs. Seven out of ten (67 per cent) stated they agreed. This level of agreement from HEIs was significantly higher than the 57 per cent of teachers, 55 per cent of headteachers and 50 per cent of young people who agreed that the International Baccalaureate Diploma is equivalent in challenge to A levels. Young people (34 per cent) were significantly more likely than the HEIs (20 per cent) and the general public (23 per cent) to disagree that the International Baccalaureate Diploma is equivalent in challenge to A levels.
- 24.1.5 Awareness of the **Pre-U** was low amongst young people, parents, employers and the general public. Of those who offered an opinion, headteachers (49 per cent agreed, 36 per cent disagreed), teachers (48 per cent agreed, 33 per cent disagreed) and HEIs (44 per cent agreed, 29 per cent disagreed) were broadly consistent in their agreement that the Pre-U is equivalent in challenge to A levels.
- 24.1.6 With regards to **BTECs (Level 3)** there were a series of significant differences between sample groups' agreement and disagreement that these qualifications are equivalent in challenge to A levels. Young people were significantly more likely than any other group to disagree that BTECs (Level 3) are equivalent in challenge to A levels. Seven out of ten young people (70 per cent) disagreed. A majority of teachers also disagreed that BTECs (Level 3) are equivalent in challenge to A levels - six out of ten teachers (57 per cent). Five out of ten headteachers (52 per cent) also disagreed that BTECs (Level 3) are of equivalent challenge.
- 24.1.7 Parents and the general public reported lower levels of disagreement and higher levels of agreement that BTECs (Level 3) are equivalent in challenge to A levels.
- 24.1.8 Awareness of **Cambridge Nationals (Level 3)** was very low, with only one in ten young people (11 per cent), employers (ten per cent), parents (nine per cent) and the general public (seven per cent) aware of them. The sample size for these groups and for HEIs was too low to analyse their perception of the challenge of Cambridge Nationals (Level 3) qualifications.
- 24.1.9 Headteachers and teachers, who had higher awareness of Cambridge Nationals (Level 3) were mixed in their opinion of whether they agreed or disagreed that Cambridge Nationals (Level 3) were of equivalent challenge to A levels. One out of three headteachers (33 per cent) agreed and the same proportion disagreed. A slightly higher proportion of teachers agreed (42 per cent) that Cambridge Nationals (Level 3) were of equivalent challenge to A levels and 35 per cent disagreed.

### **Spotlight on young people**

- Young people aged 16-17 (76 per cent agreed) and 18-19 (80 per cent) were significantly more likely than those aged 14-15 (41 per cent) to disagree that BTECs (Level 3) are equivalent in challenge to A levels.

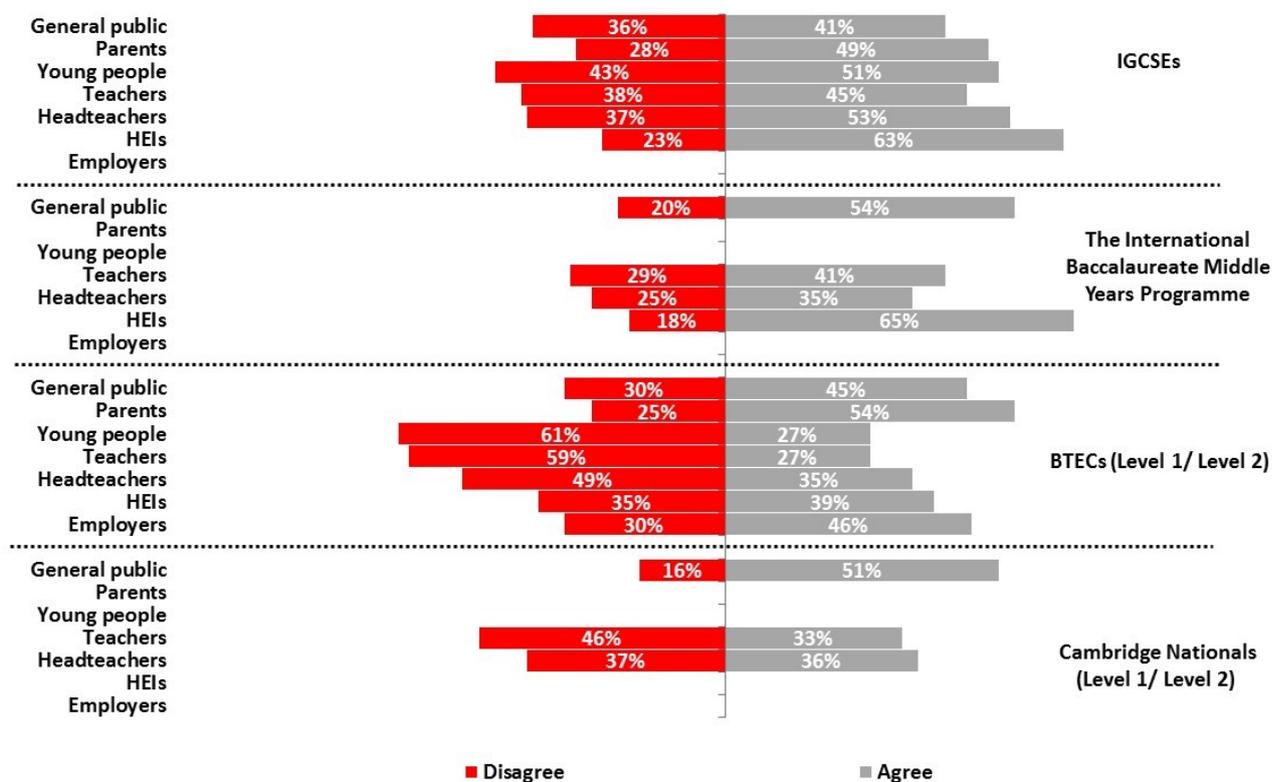
### **Spotlight on the general public**

- Younger adults aged 16-29 years old (36 per cent) were significantly more likely than those aged 30-50 years old (17 per cent) and 51+ years old (18 per cent) to disagree that the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is equivalent in challenge to A levels.
- Younger adults aged 16-29 years old (52 per cent) were also significantly more likely than those aged 30-50 years old (30 per cent) and 51+ years old (24 per cent) to disagree that BTECs (Level 3) are equivalent in challenge to A levels.

## **25 Equivalence of challenge of alternative qualifications compared with GCSEs**

25.1.1 Figure 25 shows the level of agreement that different types of qualification are of equivalent challenge to GCSEs. Although these questions were only asked of those respondents who reported they were aware of these qualifications a sizeable minority reported that they did not know if they agreed or disagreed with each statement. For this reason the data in the charts and text has been rebased to exclude 'don't knows'.

Figure 25: Level of agreement that alternative qualifications are of equivalent challenge to GCSEs



Effective base: Varies for each statement based upon level of awareness from each sample group. Only sample groups with an effective base over 50 are shown

Note: Data rebased to exclude don't know.

25.1.2 There was broadly consistent agreement that **IGCSEs** are equivalent in challenge to GCSEs. HEIs offered the highest levels of agreement (63 per cent) and were significantly more likely to agree that IGCSEs are equivalent in challenge to GCSEs than teachers (45 per cent) and the general public (41 per cent).

25.1.3 Opinion of the equivalency of challenge of IGCSEs to GCSEs was fairly mixed. Four out of ten young people (43 per cent), teachers (38 per cent), headteachers (37 per cent) and of the general public (36 per cent) disagreed that IGCSEs were equivalent in challenge to GCSEs.

25.1.4 Awareness of the **International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme** and the ability to offer an opinion was low for parents, young people and employers. HEIs (65 per cent agreed) were significantly more likely than teachers (41 per cent) and headteachers (35 per cent) to agree that the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme is equivalent in challenge to GCSEs.

25.1.5 Awareness of **BTEC (Level 1/ Level 2) qualifications** was high for all groups. Young people, teachers and headteachers were significantly more likely to disagree than HEIs, employers, parents and the general public that BTEC (Level 1/ Level 2) qualifications are of equivalent challenge to GCSEs.

25.1.6 Six out of ten young people (61 per cent) and teachers (59 per cent) disagreed that BTEC (Level 1/ Level 2) qualifications are of equivalent challenge to GCSEs, as did five out of ten headteachers (49 per cent). Whereas, one in four parents (25 per cent) agreed, as did three out of ten employers (30 per cent) and members of the general public (30 per cent).

25.1.7 In contrast, five out of ten parents (54 per cent), employers (46 per cent) and the general public (45 per cent) agreed that BTEC (Level 1/ Level 2) qualifications are of equivalent challenge to GCSEs.

25.1.8 Awareness of **Cambridge National (Level 1/ Level 2) qualifications** and the ability to offer an opinion was again low for HEIs, young people, parents and employers. Headteachers were equally split in their view of Cambridge National (Level 1/ Level 2) qualifications, with 36 per cent in agreement that Cambridge National (Level 1/ Level 2) are of equivalent challenge to GCSEs and 37 per cent in disagreement.

25.1.9 One in three teachers (33 per cent) agreed that Cambridge National (Level 1/ Level 2) are of equivalent challenge to GCSEs with, in contrast, five out of ten (46 per cent) that disagreed, although this is only indicative, not statistically significant. One in two of the general public (51 per cent) held the view that Cambridge National (Level 1/ Level 2) qualifications are of equivalent challenge to GCSEs.

### **Spotlight on teachers**

- Classroom teachers/lecturers were significantly more likely than heads of department to agree that IGCSEs are equivalent in challenge to GCSEs – 54 per cent compared with 39 per cent.

### **Spotlight on young people**

- Young people aged 16-17 (69 per cent) and 18-19 (72 per cent) were significantly more likely than those aged 14-15 (38 per cent) to disagree that BTECs (Level 1/ Level 2) are equivalent in challenge to GCSEs.

### **Spotlight on the general public**

- Older adults aged 51+ years old (55 per cent) were significantly more likely than those aged 30-50 years old (42 per cent) and 16-29 years old (31 per cent) to disagree that BTECs (Level 1/ Level 2) are equivalent in challenge to GCSEs.

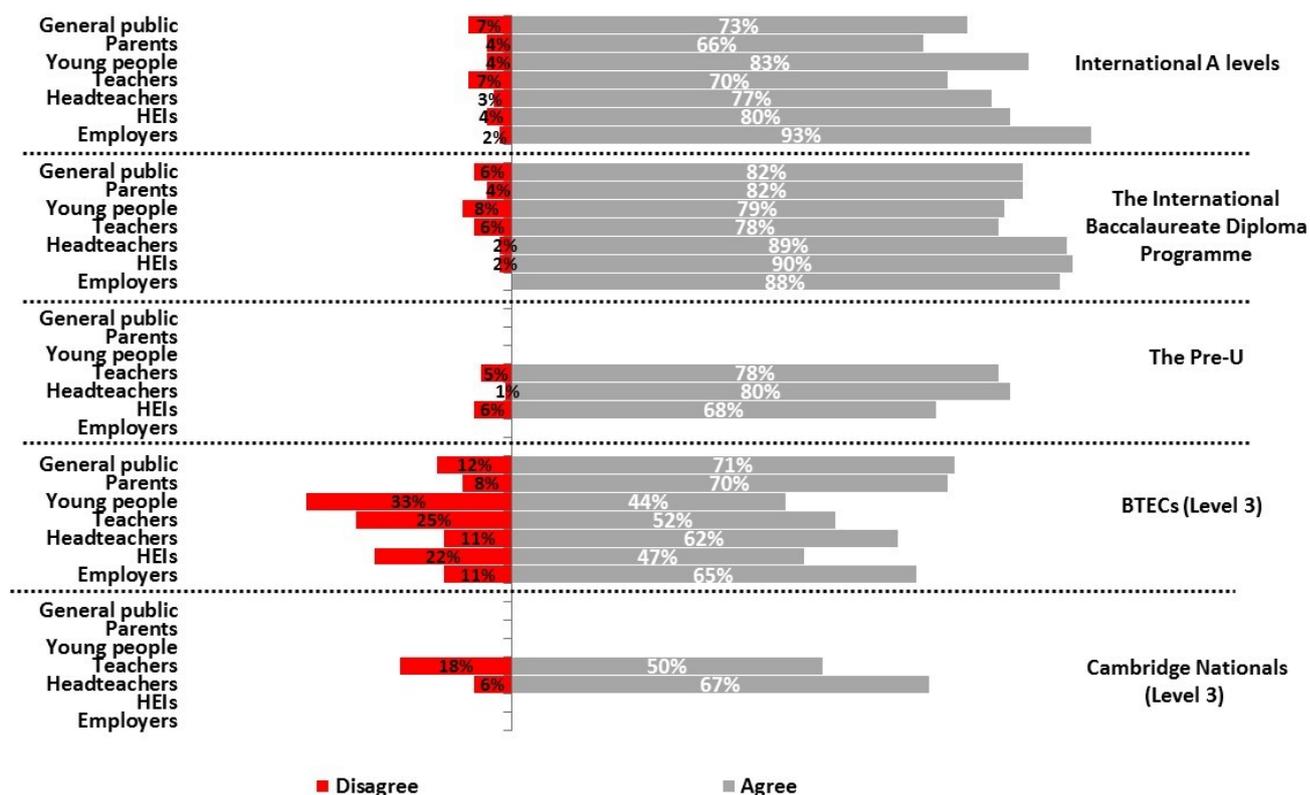
cent) to agree that BTECs (Level 1/ Level 2) are equivalent in challenge to GCSEs

- Women were also significantly more likely than men to agree that BTECs (Level 1/ Level 2) are equivalent in challenge to GCSEs – 50 per cent compared with 39 per cent.

## 26 Preparation for further study

26.1.1 Figure 26 shows the level of agreement that different types of qualification are good preparation for further study. Although these questions were only asked of those respondents who reported they were aware of these qualifications a sizeable minority reported that they did not know if they agreed or disagreed with each statement. For this reason the data in the charts and text has been rebased to exclude ‘don’t knows’.

**Figure 26: Level of agreement that alternative qualifications are good preparation for further study**



Effective base: Varies for each statement based upon level of awareness from each sample group. Only sample groups with an effective base over 50 are shown

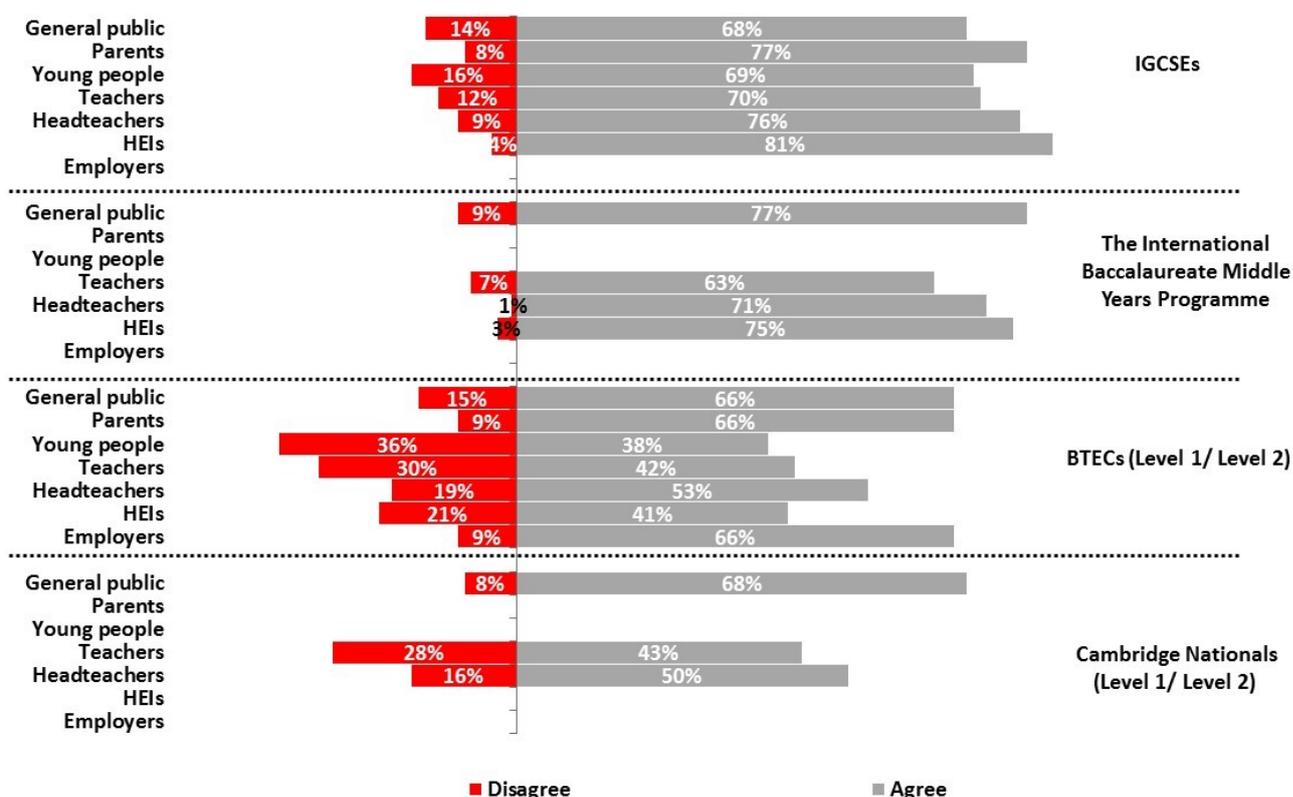
Note: Data rebased to exclude don't know.

- 26.1.2 There were strong levels of agreement from all groups that **International A levels** are good preparation for further study. Employers were strongest in their agreement, with nine out of ten (93 per cent) agreeing and just 2 per cent who disagreed; significantly higher levels of agreement than all other groups apart from young people.
- 26.1.3 Similarly, there was also strong agreement from all groups that **the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme** is good preparation for further study. HEIs (90 per cent) and headteachers (89 per cent) were particularly strong in their agreement, significantly higher than the level of agreement offered from young people (79 per cent) and teachers (78 per cent).
- 26.1.4 Levels of awareness and the ability to offer an opinion on the **Pre-U** were low for young people, parents, the general public and employers. A majority of headteachers (80 per cent), teachers (78 per cent) and HEIs (68 per cent) were in agreement that the Pre-U was good preparation for further study.
- 26.1.5 There was a more mixed view as to whether **BTEC (Level 3) qualifications** are good preparation for further study. Seven out of ten of the general public (71 per cent), parents (70 per cent) and employers (65 per cent) agreed that BTEC (Level 3) qualifications are good preparation for further study. Similarly, six out of ten headteachers (62 per cent) also agreed that BTEC (Level 3) qualifications are good preparation for further study. These levels of agreement were significantly higher than those levels offered by teachers (52 per cent), HEIs (47 per cent) and young people (44 per cent).
- 26.1.6 In contrast, one in three young people (33 per cent) disagreed that BTEC (Level 3) qualifications are good preparation for further study, significantly higher than the level of disagreement from any other group. One in four teachers (25 per cent) and one in five HEIs (22 per cent) also disagreed that BTECs (Level 3) are good preparation for further study, significantly higher than the levels of disagreement offered by the general public (11 per cent), employers (11 per cent), headteachers (11 per cent) and parents (8 per cent).

26.1.7 Levels of awareness and the ability to offer an opinion on the **Cambridge Nationals (Level 3)** were low for young people, parents, the general public, HEIs and employers. One in two teachers (50 per cent) agreed that Cambridge Nationals (Level 3) are good preparation for further study compared with one in five (18 per cent) who disagreed. In contrast, a significantly higher proportion of headteachers (67 per cent) agreed that Cambridge Nationals (Level 3) are good preparation for further study – six per cent disagreed.

26.1.8 Figure 27 shows the level of agreement as to whether another set of alternative qualifications are good preparation for further study.

**Figure 27: Level of agreement that alternative qualifications are good preparation for further study (2)**



Effective base: Varies for each statement based upon level of awareness from each sample group. Only sample groups with an effective base over 50 are shown

Note: Data rebased to exclude don't know.

26.1.9 A majority of all groups agreed that **IGCSEs** are good preparation for further study. One in four headteachers (24 per cent) and one in four parents (23 per cent) strongly agreed that IGCSEs are good preparation for further study, significantly higher than the proportion of young people (nine per cent), teachers (11 per cent) and the general public (12 per cent) who strongly agreed.

26.1.10 Similarly, there was also consistent agreement that the **International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme** is good preparation for further study. Three out of four members of the general public (77 per cent) and of HEIs (75 per cent) agreed that the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme is good preparation for further study. A majority of headteachers (71 per cent) and teachers (63 per cent) also agreed.

26.1.11 In line with previous findings there was a difference in opinion between groups on whether **BTECs (Level 1/ Level 2)** are good preparation for further study. The strongest levels of agreement that BTECs (Level 1/ Level 2) are good preparation for further study came from parents, employers and the general public – 66 per cent of each of these groups offered agreement. A small majority of headteachers (52 per cent) also offered agreement.

26.1.12 In contrast, young people and teachers were significantly more likely than any other group to disagree that BTECs (Level 1/ Level 2) are good preparation for further study. Four out of ten young people (36 per cent) and three out of ten teachers (30 per cent) disagreed – significantly higher than the proportions of HEIs (21 per cent), headteachers (19 per cent), the general public (15 per cent), employers (nine per cent) and parents (nine per cent) who disagreed that BTECs (Level 1/ Level 2) are good preparation for further study.

26.1.13 Levels of awareness and the ability to offer an opinion on the **Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/ Level 2)** were low for young people, parents, HEIs and employers. The general public (68 per cent) were significantly more likely to agree that Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/ Level 2) are good preparation for further study than the proportions of teachers (43 per cent) and headteachers (50 per cent) that agreed with this.

### Spotlight on teachers

- Teachers from independent/private schools were significantly more likely than teachers in LA maintained and academy/free schools to agree that IGCSEs are good preparation for further study – 88 per cent compared with 59 per cent and 72 per cent respectively.

### Spotlight on young people

- Young people aged 14-15 (61 per cent) were significantly more likely than those aged 16-17 (41 per cent) and 18-19 (36 per cent) to agree that BTECs (Level 3) are good preparation for further study. A similar trend emerged from BTEC (Level 1/ Level 2) qualifications where 65 per cent of 14-15 years olds reported they agreed that these were good preparation for further study significantly higher than the proportion of 16-17 year olds (27 per cent) and 18-19 year olds (21 per cent).
- One in two boys (47 per cent) agreed that BTEC (Level 1/ Level 2) qualifications are good preparation for further study – significantly higher than the 28 per cent of girls who reported this.

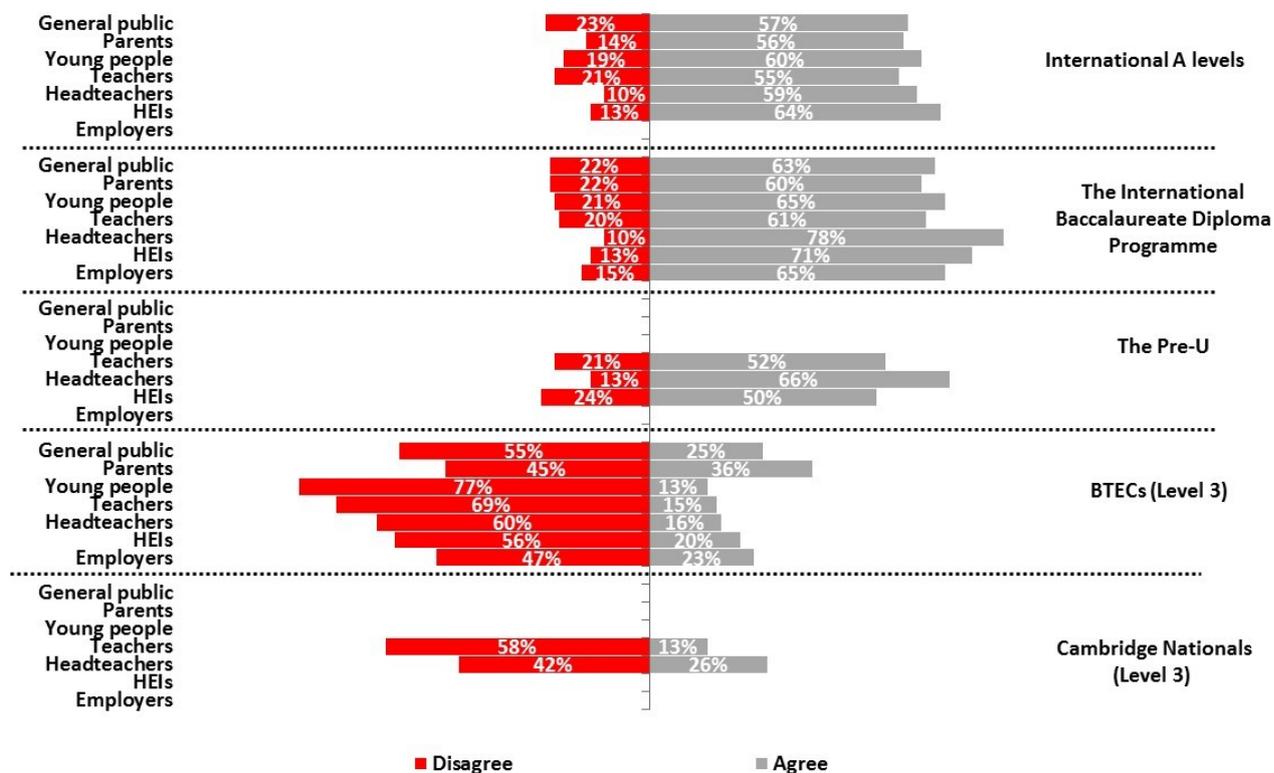
### Spotlight on the general public

- One in three younger adults aged 16-29 years old (33 per cent) reported they disagreed that BTECs (Level 3) are good preparation for further study - significantly higher than the reported level of disagreement from those aged 30-50 years old (8 per cent) and 51+ years old (4 per cent).

## 27 Perceptions on whether alternative qualifications are valued as highly as A levels by Higher Education

27.1.1 Figure 28 shows the level of agreement that different types of qualification are valued as highly as A levels by HE. Although these questions were only asked of those respondents who reported they were aware of these qualifications a sizeable minority reported that they did not know if they agreed or disagreed with each statement. For this reason the data in the charts and text has been rebased to exclude 'don't knows'.

**Figure 28: Level of agreement that alternative qualifications are valued as highly as A levels by Higher Education**



Effective base: Varies for each statement based upon level of awareness from each sample group. Only sample groups with an effective base over 50 are shown

Note: Data rebased to exclude don't know.

27.1.2 There was consistent agreement from the majority in all groups that **International A levels** are valued as highly as A levels by HE. Following a similar pattern there was also consistent agreement from a majority of all groups that the **International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme** is valued as highly as A levels by HE. Headteachers (78 per cent) were strongest in their agreement and significantly more likely than young people, employers, the general public, teachers and parents to think this. Seven out of ten HEIs (71 per cent) agreed that the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is valued as highly as A levels by HE, one in ten (13 per cent) disagreed.

27.1.3 Levels of awareness and the ability to offer an opinion on the **Pre-U** were low for young people, parents, the general public and employers. There were no significant differences in the perceptions of HEIs, headteachers and teachers.

- 27.1.4 Clear differences in opinion were again seen in the data in relation to **BTEC (Level 3)** qualifications. A majority of HEIs, young people, teachers, headteachers and the general public disagreed that BTECs (Level 3) are valued as highly as A levels by HE.
- 27.1.5 Eight out of ten young people (77 per cent) and seven out of ten teachers (69 per cent) offered disagreement that BTECs (Level 3) are valued as highly as A levels by HE, significantly higher than the proportions of other groups that disagreed.
- 27.1.6 Levels of awareness and the ability to offer an opinion on the **Cambridge Nationals (Level 3)** were low for young people, parents, HEIs, the general public and employers. Where a reliable sample of teachers was able to provide a view it was perceived that Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/ Level 2) were not valued as highly as A levels by HE.
- 27.1.7 Six out of ten teachers (58 per cent) disagreed that they were valued as highly and just 13 per cent agreed. Headteachers were more split in their views, with 42 per cent in disagreement and one in four (26 per cent) in agreement.

### **Spotlight on young people**

- Young people aged 14-15 (31 per cent) were significantly more likely than those aged 16-17 (7 per cent) and 18-19 (8 per cent) to agree that BTECs (Level 3) are valued as highly as A levels by HE
- A similar trend emerged from BTEC (Level 1/ Level 2) qualifications where 65 per cent of 14-15 years olds reported they agreed that these were valued as highly as A levels by HE, significantly higher than the proportion of 16-17 year olds (27 per cent) and 18-19 year olds (21 per cent) who reported this.

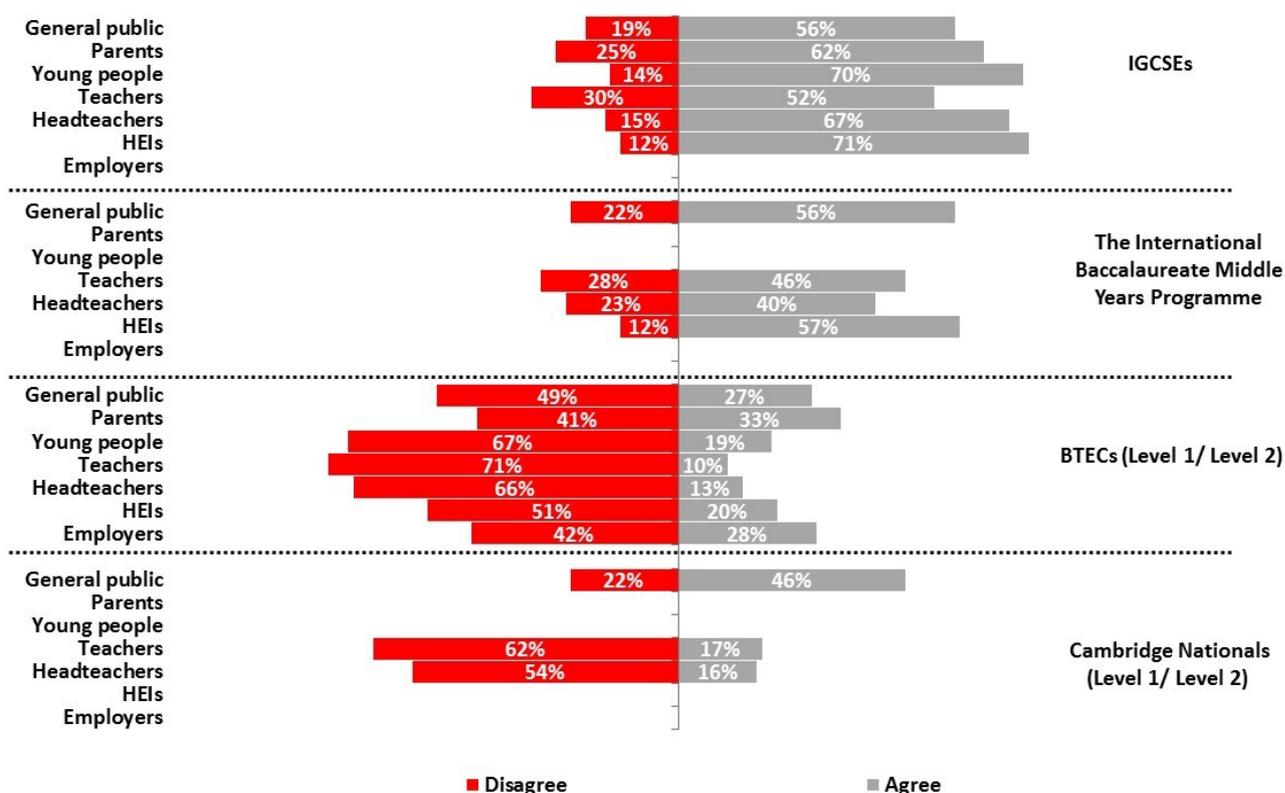
### **Spotlight on higher education**

- HEIs from the Russell Group were significantly more likely than those post 1992/new universities to agree that the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is valued as highly as A levels by HE – 84 per cent compared with 67 per cent. Caution is advised in interpreting these results due to the small base size.
- Post 1992/New HEIs were significantly more likely than HEIs from the Russell Group to agree that BTECs (Level 3) qualifications are valued as highly as A levels by HE – 26 per cent compared with 12 per cent. Caution is advised in interpreting these results due to the small base size.

## 28 Perceptions on whether alternative qualifications are valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education

28.1.1 Figure 29 shows the level of agreement that different types of qualification are valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education. Although these questions were only asked of those respondents who reported they were aware of these qualifications a sizeable minority reported that they did not know if they agreed or disagreed with each statement. For this reason the data in the charts and text has been rebased to exclude ‘don’t knows’.

**Figure 29: Level of agreement that alternative qualifications are valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education**



Effective base: Varies for each statement based upon level of awareness from each sample group. Only sample groups with an effective base over 50 are shown

Note: Data rebased to exclude don't know.

28.1.2 There was a consistent view from a majority of all groups that **IGCSEs** are valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education. HEIs (71 per cent), young people (70 per cent) and headteachers (67 per cent) were strongest in their agreement and significantly more likely than teachers (52 per cent) and the general public (56 per cent) to agree that IGCSEs are valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education.

- 28.1.3 Three out of ten teachers (30 per cent) disagreed that IGCSEs are valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education, significantly higher than the levels of disagreement reported by the general public (19 per cent), headteachers (15 per cent), teachers (14 per cent) and HEIs (12 per cent).
- 28.1.4 No significant differences were found in the perceptions of whether the **International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme** is valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education. Views were more mixed in this area, with the general public more likely to agree than teachers or headteachers.
- 28.1.5 Young people, teachers and headteachers were consistent in their disagreement that **BTECs (Level 1/ Level 2)** are valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education. Seven out of ten teachers (71 per cent), headteachers (66 per cent) and young people (67 per cent) disagreed that BTECs (Level 1/ Level 2) are valued as highly – significantly higher than the proportions of HEIs (51%), the general public (49 per cent), employers (42 per cent) and parents (41 per cent) who reported this.
- 28.1.6 Again, levels of awareness and the ability to offer an opinion on the **Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/ Level 2)** were low for young people, parents, HEIs and employers. Teachers (62 per cent) and headteachers (54 per cent) were significantly more likely than the general public (22 per cent) to disagree that Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/ Level 2) are valued as highly as GCSEs by HE. Five out of ten of the general public (46 per cent) agreed that Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/ Level 2) are valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education.

### Spotlight on young people

- Young people aged 16-17 years old (79 per cent) and those aged 18-19 years old (77 per cent) were significantly more likely than those aged 14-15 years old (43 per cent) to disagree that BTEC (Level 1/ Level 2) qualifications are valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education.

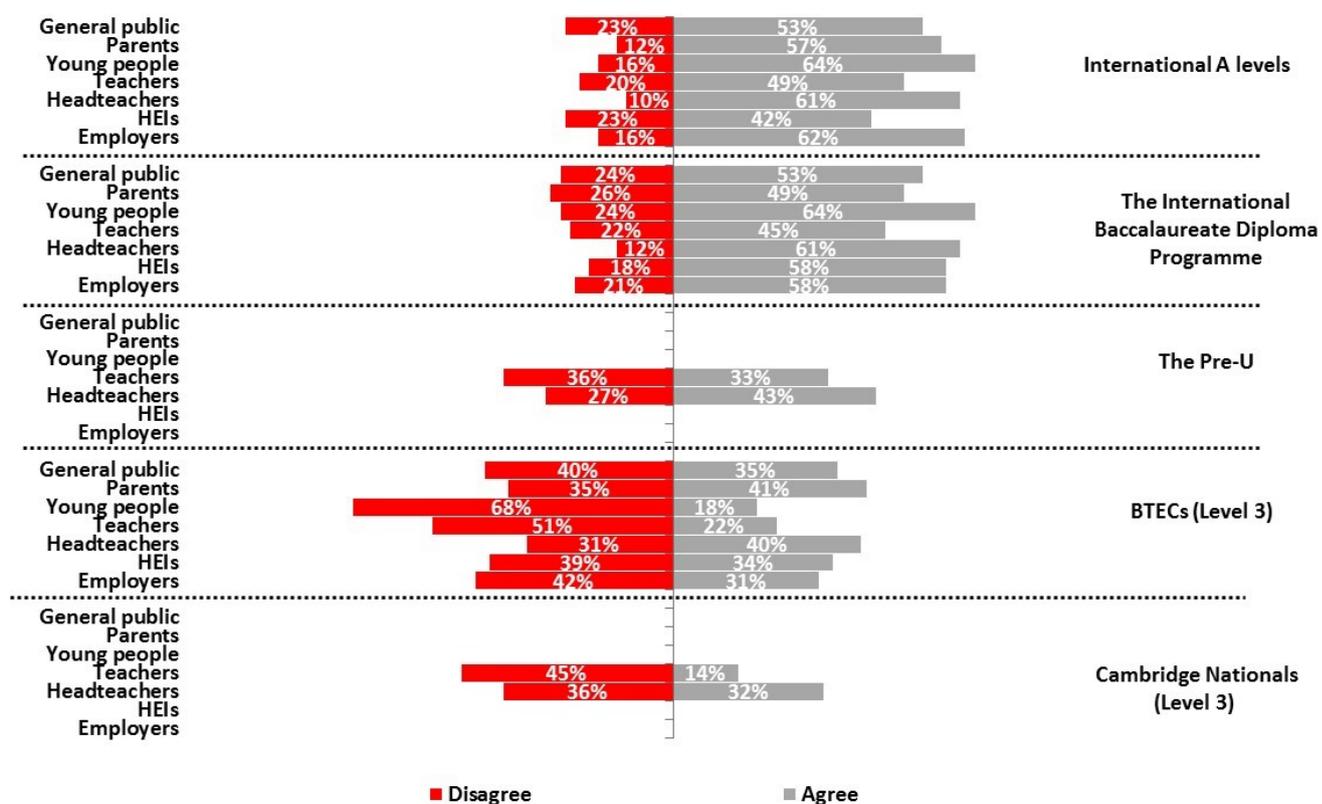
### Spotlight on the general public

- Seven out of ten younger adults aged 16-29 years old (70 per cent) reported they disagreed that BTECs (Level 1/ Level 2) are valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education - significantly higher than the reported level of agreement from those aged 30-50 years old (43 per cent) and 51+ years old (41 per cent).

## 29 Perceptions on whether alternative qualifications are valued as highly as A levels by employers

29.1.1 Figure 30 shows the level of agreement that different types of qualification are valued as highly as A levels by employers. Although these questions were only asked of those respondents who reported they were aware of these qualifications, a sizeable minority reported that they did not know if they agreed or disagreed with each statement. For this reason the data in the charts and text has been rebased to exclude ‘don’t knows’.

**Figure 30: Level of agreement that alternative qualifications are valued as highly as A levels by employers**



Effective base: Varies for each statement based upon level of awareness from each sample group. Only sample groups with an effective base over 50 are shown

Note: Data rebased to exclude don't know.

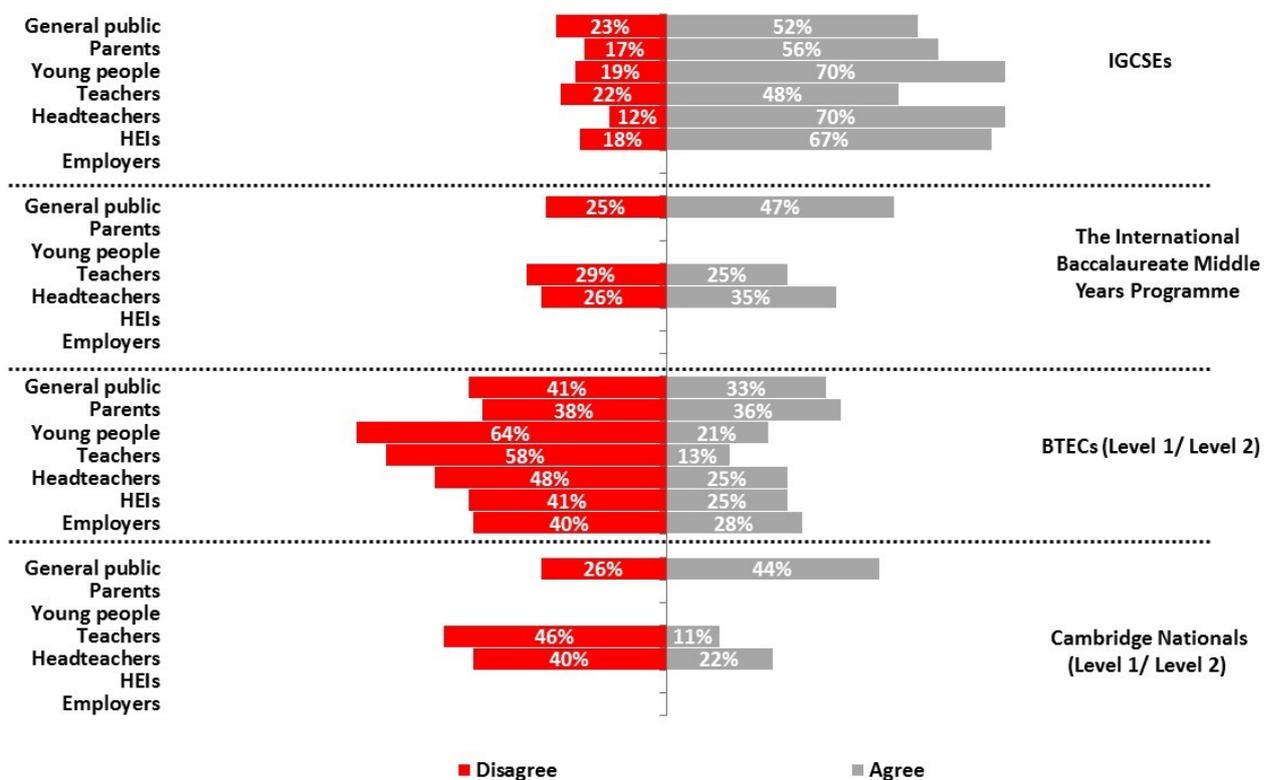
29.1.2 Six out of ten employers (62 per cent) agreed that **International A levels** are valued as highly as A levels by employers. This was on a par with the proportion of headteachers (61 per cent) and young people (64 per cent) who reported this and significantly higher than the proportion of HEIs (42 per cent) who reported that they agreed that international A levels are valued as highly as A levels by employers.

- 29.1.3 A majority of young people, the general public, headteachers, HEIs and employers all agreed that the **International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme** is valued as highly as A levels by employers. Teachers and parents were also significantly more likely to agree than disagree that the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is valued as highly as A levels by employers.
- 29.1.4 Sample sizes only allowed the views of headteachers and teachers to be analysed in relation to the **Pre-U**. In both groups there was a degree of uncertainty. Thirty six per cent of teachers disagreed, 33 per cent agreed and 31 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed that the Pre-U is valued as highly as A levels by employers. In comparison, four out of ten headteachers (43 per cent) agreed and 27 per cent disagreed with 30 per cent neither agreeing nor disagreeing.
- 29.1.5 As figure 30 shows, levels of agreement that **BTECs (Level 3)** are valued as highly as A levels by employers were lower than International A levels or the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme – with young people significantly less likely than any other group to agree that BTECs (Level 3) are valued as highly as A levels by employers.
- 29.1.6 Views of the other sample groups were mixed. Although one in two of all teachers (51 per cent) also disagreed that BTECs (Level 3) are valued as highly as A levels by employers, significantly higher than the 22 per cent who agreed.

### **30 Perceptions on whether alternative qualifications are valued as highly as GCSEs by employers**

- 30.1.1 Figure 31 shows the level of agreement that different types of qualification are valued as highly as A levels by employers. Although these questions were only asked of those respondents who reported they were aware of these qualifications, a sizeable minority reported that they did not know if they agreed or disagreed with each statement. For this reason the data in the charts and text has been rebased to exclude 'don't knows'.

**Figure 31: Level of agreement that alternative qualifications are valued as highly as GCSEs by employers**



Effective base: Varies for each statement based upon level of awareness from each sample group. Only sample groups with an effective base over 50 are shown

Note: Data rebased to exclude don't know.

30.1.2 **IGCSEs** were the alternative qualification most likely to be perceived as being valued as highly as GCSEs by employers. Seven out of ten young people (70 per cent), headteachers (70 per cent) and HEIs (67 per cent) agreed that IGCSEs are valued as highly as GCSEs by employers – significantly higher than the five out of ten (45 per cent) of employers who reported this. Some caution is advised due to the small base size for employers.

30.1.3 From those groups where base sizes allow a reliable comparison, views were mixed as to whether the **International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme** is valued as highly as GCSEs by employers. One in two members of the general public (47 per cent) agreed that the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme is valued as highly as GCSEs by employers. Teachers (46 per cent) and headteachers (38 per cent) were most likely to neither agree nor disagree that the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme is valued as highly as GCSEs by employers.

- 30.1.4 Three out of ten employers (28 per cent) reported that **BTECs (Level 1/ Level 2)** are valued as highly as GCSEs by employers – with four out of ten (40 per cent) disagreeing, although not a statistically significant difference. Young people (64 per cent) and teachers (58 per cent) were significantly more likely than any other group to disagree that BTECs (Level 1/ Level 2) are valued as highly as GCSEs by employers.
- 30.1.5 The general public were significantly more likely than teachers and headteachers to agree that **Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/ Level 2)** are valued as highly as GCSEs by employers.

## Section 6: Awareness and perceptions of Ofqual

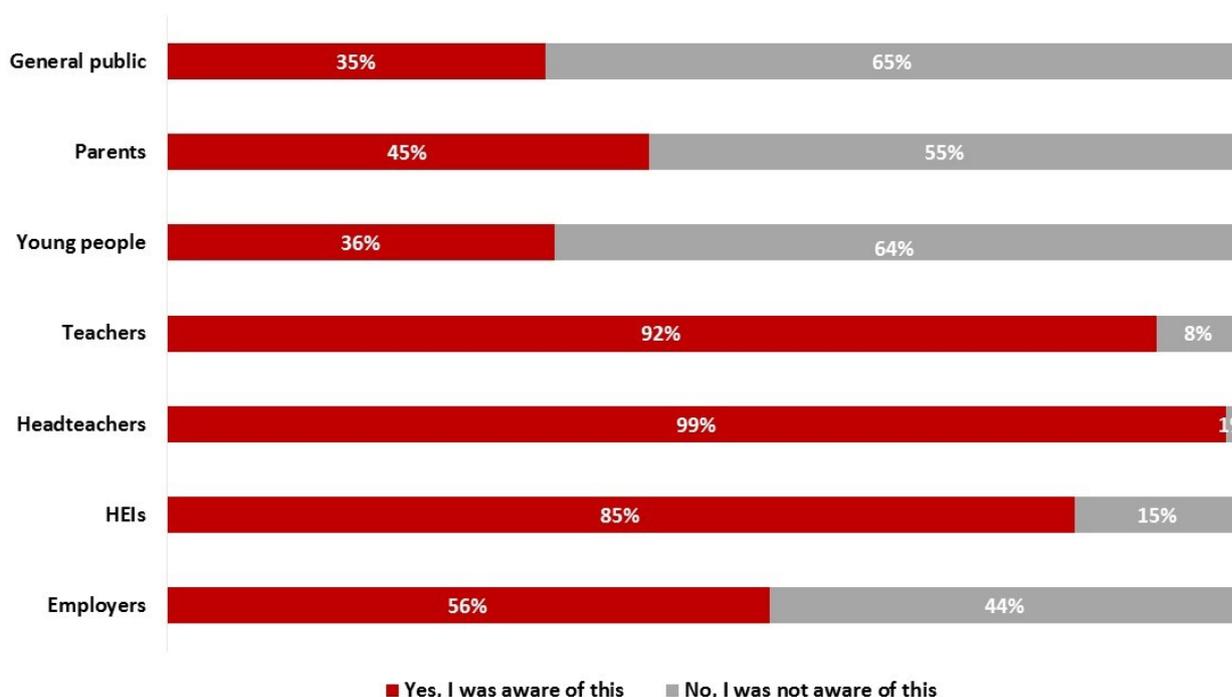
The final section of this report looks at perceptions of Ofqual.

### 31 Awareness of Ofqual

31.1.1 Headteachers and teachers were significantly more likely than all other groups to say that they were aware Ofqual is the independent regulator of qualifications, examinations and assessments in England. At 99 per cent this was almost all the headteachers surveyed and over nine in ten (92 per cent) teachers.

31.1.2 In contrast, general public and young people were significantly more likely than all other groups to state that they were not aware of Ofqual’s role as a regulator with 65 per cent and 64 per cent stating this respectively.

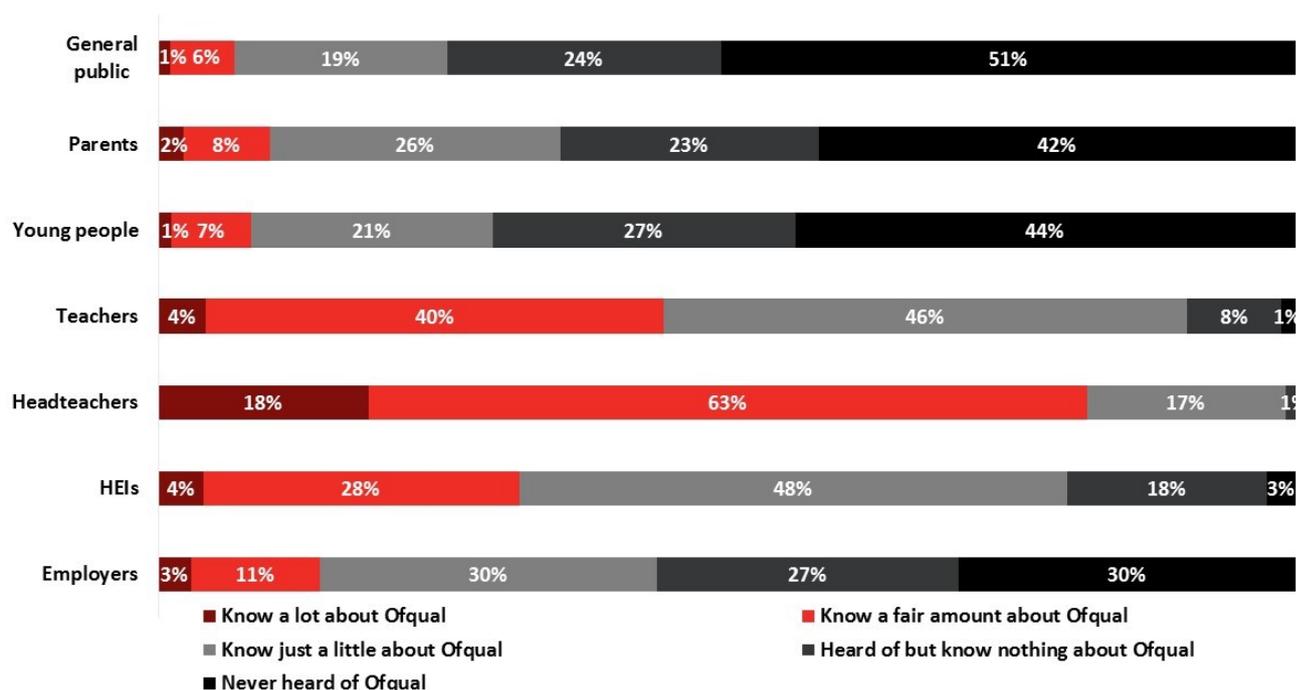
**Figure 32: Before today, were you aware that Ofqual is the independent regulator of qualifications, examinations and assessments in England?**



Effective base: All respondents (Nat rep n=998; Parents n=352; Young people n=313; Teachers n=526; Headteachers n=227; HEIs n=259; Employers n=210)

31.1.3 Headteachers were significantly more likely than all other groups to have a substantial amount of knowledge about Ofqual, with just over eight in ten (81 per cent) stating they knew a lot/ fair amount about the organisation. Half as many teachers however indicated knowledge of Ofqual with just over four in ten (44 per cent) stating they knew a lot/ fair amount about the organisation.

Figure 33: Which of the following statements best describes your knowledge of Ofqual?



Effective base: All respondents (Nat rep n=998; Parents n=352; Young people n=313; Teachers n=526; Headteachers n=227; HEIs n=259; Employers n=210)

31.1.4 At the other end of the spectrum, the general public were significantly more likely than all other groups to say they have never heard of Ofqual with one in two (51 per cent) stating this.

31.1.5 Awareness of Ofqual was low for young people and parents. Four in ten (44 per cent) young people had never heard of Ofqual with a similar story for parents (42 per cent having never heard of Ofqual).

31.1.6 The finding that awareness of Ofqual is very high amongst teaching professionals and knowledge of Ofqual is much lower amongst parents, students and the public is consistent with wave 12 of the perceptions survey.

### Spotlight on teachers

- Classroom/ subject teachers were significantly more likely than heads of departments/ subjects to state that they have heard of Ofqual but know nothing about them (13 per cent compared with four per cent).

### Spotlight on young people

- Young people aged 14 to 15 were almost twice as likely as those aged 16 to 19 to state they had never heard of Ofqual – 66 per cent of 14 to 15s compared with 31 per cent of 16 to 17s and 35 per cent of 18 to 19s.

## 32 Perceptions of Ofqual

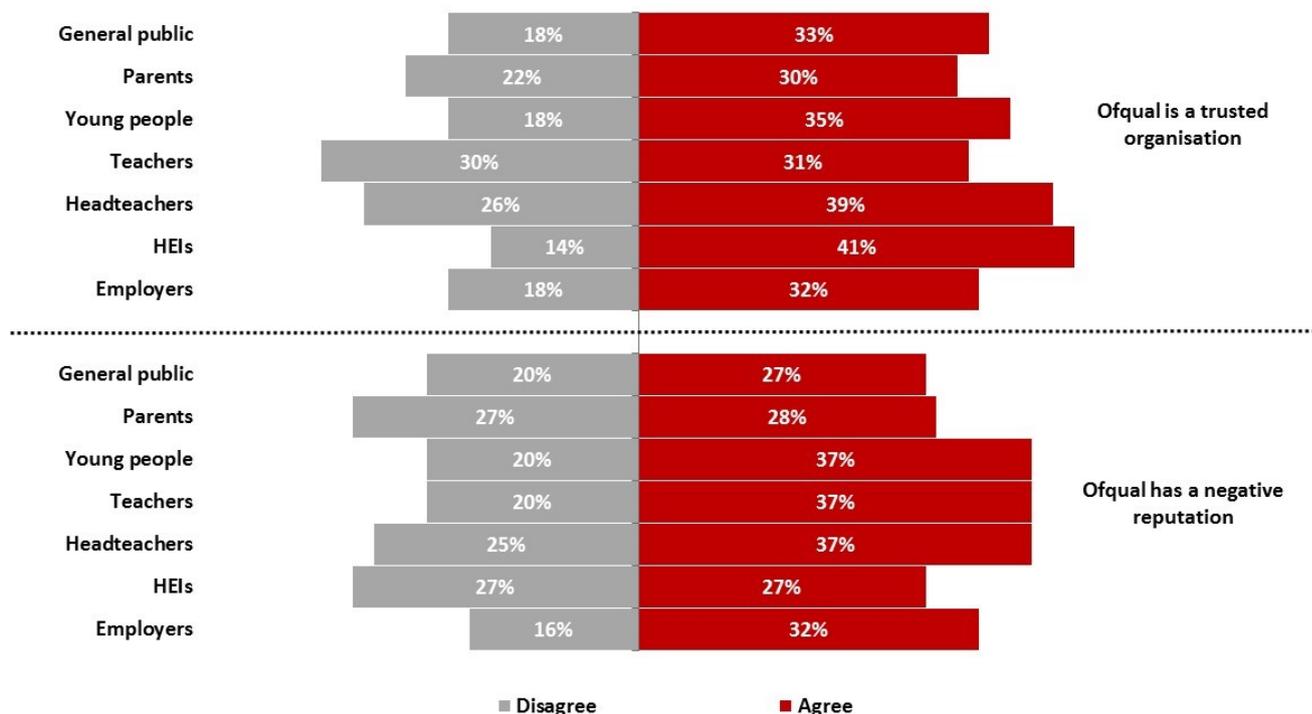
32.1.1 Those who were *aware* of Ofqual were asked further questions around what they thought of the regulator. Teachers were significantly more likely than all other groups (except headteachers) to disagree that Ofqual is a trusted organisation with one in three (30 per cent) stating this.

32.1.2 Teachers were also more likely to agree that Ofqual has a negative reputation with just under four out of ten (37 per cent) stating this. Other groups who felt this way included headteachers and young people (37 per cent).

32.1.3 HEIs however were significantly more likely than teachers, parents and the general public to agree that Ofqual is a trusted organisation – 41 per cent compared with 31 per cent, 30 per cent and 33 per cent respectively.

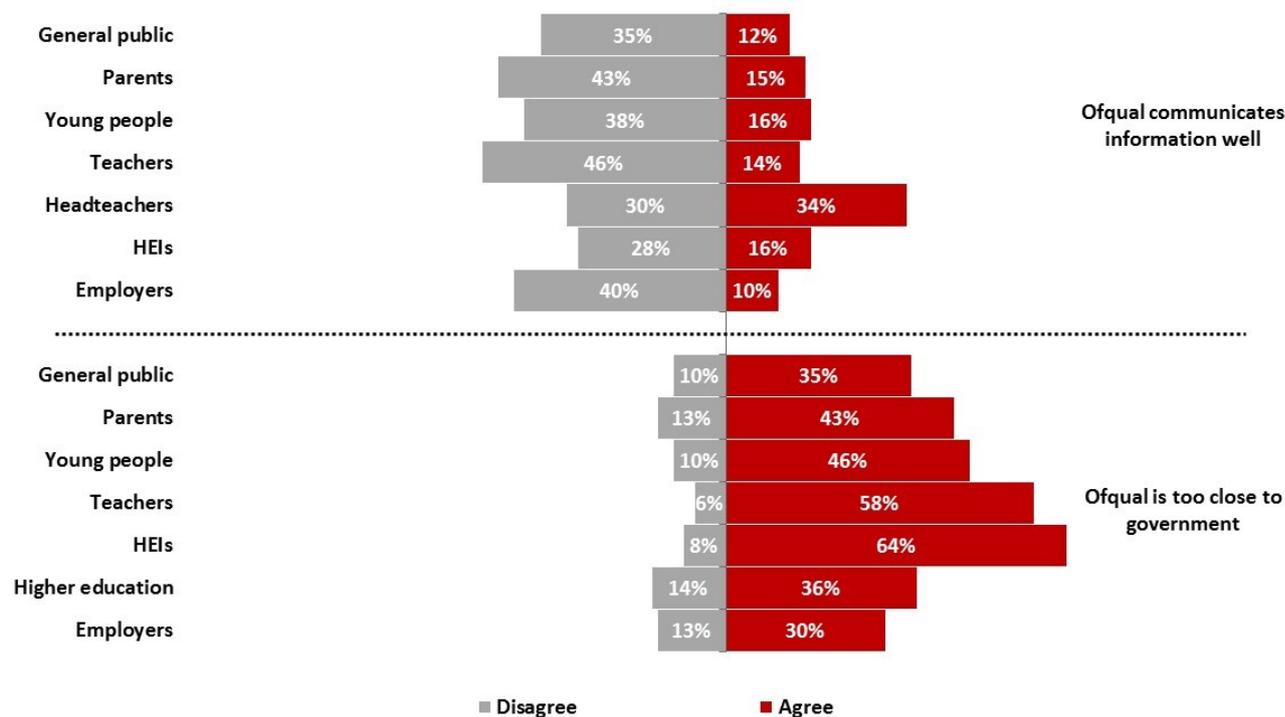
32.1.4 With regards to the reputation of Ofqual, headteachers, teachers, young people and employers were more likely to agree than disagree that Ofqual has a negative reputation. Parents and HEIs were mixed in their level of agreement.

**Figure 34: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**



Effective base: All respondents aware of Ofqual (Nat rep n=347; Parents n=159; Young people n=109; Teachers n=487; Headteachers n=224; HEIs n=219; Employers n=113)

Figure 35: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Effective base: All respondents aware of Ofqual (Nat rep n=347; Parents n=159; Young people n=109; Teachers n=487; Headteachers n=224; HEIs n=219; Employers n=113)

32.1.5 Headteachers were significantly more likely than all other groups to agree that Ofqual communicates information well (34 per cent), although a similar proportion of headteachers disagreed (30 per cent). Teachers on the other hand did not share the same view with just under half (46 per cent) disagreeing with this statement, significantly higher than the 14 per cent who agreed.

32.1.6 Teachers in particular are significantly more likely than Higher Education Institutions, headteachers and the general public to disagree that Ofqual communicates well.

32.1.7 When it comes to Ofqual’s relationship with the government, all sample groups are more likely to agree than disagree that Ofqual is too close to government. Headteachers and teachers are significantly more likely than all other groups to agree that Ofqual is too close to government with over six in ten (64 per cent) headteachers stating this and just under six in ten (58 per cent) teachers stating this.

### Spotlight on teachers

- Teachers from independent/ private schools were least likely to disagree that Ofqual communicates information well – 29 per cent compared with 52 per cent of teachers in community schools, 50 per cent in local authority

maintained schools, 48 per cent in FE colleges and 46 per cent in academy/ free schools.

- Teachers within FE colleges that responded to the survey were most likely to disagree that Ofqual is a trusted organisation – 44 per cent compared with 27 per cent of teachers in academy/ free schools, 25 per cent in local authority maintained schools, 23 per cent in community schools and 22 per cent in independent/ private schools.
- Teachers within academy and maintained schools were far more likely than those in independent/ private schools to agree that Ofqual is too close to government – 60 per cent compared with 42 per cent respectively.

### **Spotlight on employers**

- Employers from larger organisations (250+ employees) were twice as likely as those from smaller ones (2 to 249 employees) to agree that Ofqual is a trusted organisation (42 per cent compared with 19 per cent respectively). They were also more likely to agree that Ofqual is too close to government (38 per cent compared with 19 per cent of smaller organisations).

### **Spotlight on the general public**

- Men were also far more likely than women to state that they were aware of Ofqual being an independent regulator – 43 per cent compared with 28 per cent of women.
- When it comes to trust, older adults seem far more sceptical with levels of trust declining with age – 46 per cent of 16 to 29s agreed that Ofqual is a trusted organisation compared with 31 per cent of those aged 30 to 50 and 24 per cent of those aged 51+.
- Younger adults were also more likely to disagree that Ofqual has a negative reputation – 16 to 29 year olds were three times more likely than those aged 51+ to disagree that Ofqual has a negative reputation – 33 per cent compared with 11 per cent respectively. With one in five (20 per cent) 30 to 50 year olds disagreeing, 16 to 29 year olds were also significantly more likely than this group to disagree too.

## Appendix A – Additional data

32.1.8 One additional question was asked that sat outside questions on specific qualifications.

The results of this are shown in figure 36 below. The data shows that sizeable proportions of HEIs, young people, parents and the general public do not know if the appeals system is fair.

32.1.9 Headteachers and teachers have higher awareness of the appeals system and were both significantly more likely to disagree than agree that the appeals system is fair. Headteachers were strongest in their level of disagreement, with 1 in 2 disagreeing – significantly higher than the level of disagreement offered by any other group.

**Figure 36: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? - The enquiries about results / appeals system is fair**

	HEIs	Young People	Headteachers	Teachers	Parents	General public
	A	B	C	D	E	F
<b>Unweighted Base</b>	291	324	241	704	353	1005
<b>Weighted Base</b>	291	324	241	704	353	1005
<b>Effective Base</b>	259	313	227	526	352	998
Strongly agree [5]	2%	3%	2%	2%	1%	2%
Agree [4]	18%	24%	27%	25%	17%	19%
Neither agree nor disagree [3]	35%	24%	20%	31%	34%	27%
Disagree [2]	7%	21%	32%	20%	12%	10%
Strongly disagree [1]	3%	5%	18%	10%	6%	2%
Don't know [0]	35%	24%	1%	12%	31%	39%
Net: Agree	20%	26%	29%	27%	17%	22%
Net: Disagree	10%	26%	50%	30%	18%	12%

## Appendix B – Technical report

Appendix B outlines the composition of the achieved sampling and additional information on the methods adopted in wave 13.

### Headteachers and teachers sample

#### Sample coverage

The sample was designed to be representative sample of Head teachers/Deputy Heads and teachers of A levels, GCSE and other academic and vocational qualifications secondary schools and colleges across England. Providing coverage across the following types of establishment:

- Local authority maintained schools;
- Academy and Free schools
- Independent schools
- FE colleges and sixth form centres

To make sure that the survey was representative of establishments teaching qualifications for 14-19 year olds, only certain types of schools/colleges were eligible for the survey. Eligible types of schools and colleges matched the definition used in previous years of the survey, that is secondary and middle-deemed-secondary schools, academies teaching key stage 4/post-16, independent schools teaching key stage 4/post-16, and post-16 institutions.

#### Sample frame

The sample of head teachers and teachers were drawn from two sources.

##### 1. Education Company Education list

Firstly, contacts in schools were drawn from the Education Company's Education List. Containing over 5 million education data profiles, including 400,000 named teachers and lecturers including email addresses, and details and profiles of more than 100,000 schools profiles, the most accurate and comprehensive education data set available anywhere in the UK.

This was used as a database to select contacts in schools to be surveyed, as data is held on school characteristics this allowed us to develop a sample that was representative of school size, type and region. Sample targets were set and the total sample was structured to meet the proportions relevant to the school population in England. The database contained named contacts with generic school email addresses that allowed the survey to be targeted at specific subject teachers in the specified schools.

## 2. YouGov Panel

The research was also conducted via teachers and head teachers registered to the YouGov panel, who consent to participate in research with YouGov. A quota sampling approach was adopted to the sample drawn from the YouGov panel to ensure broad representativeness by school type, size and region.

### **Sample selection**

The sample was selected to ensure the representativeness of the results in line with the school and teacher population in England. The sample frame was designed using the Department for Education (DfE) School Capacity and the Edubase data<sup>10</sup>. The sample frame was stratified by the following variables:

- School type (maintained, academy, special school / PRU, independent)
- English region

To maintain broad consistency with the sampling approach adopted in wave 12. Two samples were drawn that have different characteristics between the head teacher (senior leader) sample and the teachers' sample. Whilst drawing a sample of schools was appropriate for the headteacher survey, it was decided that in order to examine the views of a representative sample of teachers in England, this would entail selecting multiple teachers working at the larger establishments. This meant that, as with the wave 12 survey, the sampling design for the teacher survey took account of the number of teachers working in each school/establishment.

Using the Education List database, a random stratified sample of school contacts were drawn in line with the above parameters. The sample drawn was compared with the DfE school population statistics to ensure they were broadly in line. In total a sample of 10,000 school contacts that matched the sample criteria were drawn at random from the Education List database.

For the head teacher sample was drawn at random from the list of eligible schools. As previously discussed the teacher sample was drawn to take into account the numbers of teachers at different types of establishment and multiple teacher contacts were included for schools of a larger size.

Alongside the sample drawn from the Education List database a random sample of 4,000 head teachers (senior leaders) and teachers from the YouGov panel were contacted to take part in

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.education.gov.uk/edubase/home.xhtml>

the research. These respondents were contacted at random to take part and sampled to be proportionate of the school population and the teacher population.

### **Achieved sample size and weighting**

The unweighted achieved sample size and breakdown of the sample by key characteristics for school/teacher samples is shown in the table below. Alongside this the weighted base a weight factors applied are also shown.

**Table 1: Achieved sample size by role, region, school type and size – unweighted counts**

	Teachers sample		Teachers sample	
	Unweighted base	Weighted base	Smallest weight factor	Largest weight factor
<b>Teachers - School type</b>	<b>704</b>	<b>704</b>		
Local Authority maintained school	176	232	0.8	2.0
Academy	321	239	0.4	1.1
Independent school	110	49	0.4	1.1
FE college	51	169	0.3	0.7
Other	46	14	2.1	5.4
<b>Senior - School type</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>241</b>		
Local Authority maintained school	56	70	0.9	1.8
Academy	96	92	0.7	1.4
Independent school	70	57	0.6	1.2
FE college	10	20	1.6	2.6
Other	9	2	0.2	0.3
<b>Teachers - Region</b>	<b>704</b>	<b>704</b>		
North East	40	28	0.2	2.1
North West	97	91	0.3	3.0
Yorkshire and the Humber	65	56	0.2	2.5
East Midlands	57	56	0.3	4.0
West Midlands	83	77	0.3	3.2
East of England	65	77	0.3	3.9
London	81	120	0.5	5.4
South East	142	127	0.3	3.8
South West	74	70	0.3	3.3
<b>Headteachers - Region</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>241</b>		
North East	7	10	1.0	2.6

North West	31	31	0.2	2.0
Yorkshire and the Humber	19	19	0.2	2.1
East Midlands	25	19	0.6	1.6
West Midlands	24	27	0.9	2.3
East of England	19	27	0.3	1.8
London	35	41	1.0	1.5
South East	51	43	0.2	1.8
South West	27	24	0.2	1.2

## **Public, parents and young people’s samples**

### **Sample coverage**

The public, parents and students sample were drawn from the YouGov online research panel of 400,000 adults who have consented up to do research with YouGov.

Three distinct samples were drawn, these were:

- A nationally representative survey sample of 16 plus adults in England. Sampled to be representative of the adult population in England using YouGov’s English weighting profile of age interlocked with gender, region and social grade.
- A survey of young people aged 14-19 who are just about to take, are currently taking or have recently taken A-Levels, GCSEs and other academic and vocational qualifications. Sampled to be representative of England by gender, age within the age range and region using England representative statistics.
- A survey of parents of young people who meet the ‘student’ criteria defined above. Sampled to be representative of parents by gender, social grade and English region

### **Sample frame**

The samples of members of the public, parents’ and students were drawn from the YouGov panel. Over the last ten years, YouGov has carefully recruited a panel of over 400,000 UK adults to take part in our surveys.

### **Sample selection**

The samples were selected to ensure the representativeness of the results in line with the population of each sample group in England.

For nationally representative samples, YouGov draws a sub-sample of the panel that is representative in terms of age and gender interlocked, social class and region, and invites this sub-sample to complete a survey.

We have a proprietary, automated sampling system that invites respondents based on their profile information and how that aligns with targets for surveys that are currently active. Respondents are automatically, randomly selected based on survey availability and how that matches their profile information.

### **Achieved sample size and weighting**

The achieved sample size and breakdown of the public, parents' and students samples by key characteristics and associated weighting factors is shown in the tables below:

**Table 2: Summary of achieved public sample and weighting scheme**

	Public sample		Public sample	
	Unweighted base	Weighted base	Smallest weight factor	Largest weight factor
	1005	1005		
<b>Region</b>				
North East	50	50	0.9	1.2
North West	135	131	0.8	1.1
Yorkshire and the Humber	102	101	0.8	1.2
East Midlands	88	90	0.9	1.2
West Midlands	104	100	0.8	1.1
East of England	111	111	0.8	1.1
London	150	151	0.9	1.2
South East	162	171	0.9	1.2
South West	103	101	0.8	1.1
<b>Age and gender</b>				
Male 16-24	77	80	1.0	1.2
Male 25-39	125	121	0.8	1.1
Male 40-54	125	131	0.9	1.2
Male 55+	162	161	0.9	1.1
Women 16-24	71	70	0.9	1.2
Women 25-39	120	121	0.9	1.1
Women 40-54	140	131	0.8	1.0
Women 55+	185	191	0.9	1.1
<b>Social grade</b>				
ABC1	554	583	0.9	1.2
C2DE	451	422	0.8	1.1

**Table 3: Summary of achieved parents sample weighting scheme**

	Parents sample		Parents sample	
	Unweighted base	Weighted base	Smallest weight factor	Largest weight factor
	353	353		
<b>Region</b>				
North East	15	18	1.2	1.2
North West	47	46	1.0	1.0
Yorkshire and the Humber	35	35	1.0	1.0
East Midlands	32	32	1.0	1.0
West Midlands	36	35	1.0	1.0
East of England	39	39	1.0	1.0
London	55	56	1.0	1.0
South East	58	56	1.0	1.0
South West	36	35	1.0	1.0
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	168	169	1.0	1.2
Female	185	184	1.0	1.2
<b>Social grade</b>				
ABC1	195	194	1.0	1.2
C2DE	158	159	1.0	1.2

**Table 4: Summary of achieved young people sample and weighting scheme**

	Young people sample		Young people sample	
	Unweighted base	Weighted base	Smallest weight factor	Largest weight factor
	324	324		
<b>Region</b>				
North East	15	16	1.0	1.1
North West	39	42	1.0	1.1
Yorkshire and the Humber	32	32	0.9	1.1
East Midlands	33	29	0.8	1.0
West Midlands	36	32	0.8	1.0
East of England	29	36	1.1	1.3
London	39	52	1.2	1.4
South East	61	52	0.8	0.9
South West	40	32	0.7	0.9
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	161	162	0.7	1.4
Female	163	162	0.7	1.4
<b>Age</b>				
14-15 year olds	126	108	0.7	1.2

16-17 year olds	99	108	0.9	1.4
18-19 year olds	99	108	0.9	1.4

## Employer sample

### **Sample coverage**

The employer sample was designed to be representative of the English business population by organisation size and sector. The sample definition ensured that only those in middle manager and above roles with the ability to answer on behalf of their organisation were eligible to take the survey. A further criteria was added to ensure that each employer had recruited a young person aged 16-24 in the last 12 months.

### **Sample frame**

The employer sample was drawn from two sources:

- The YouGov business panel which contains over 9,000 senior decision makers and 8,000 employees with decision making responsibility for HR / personnel within their organisation.
- A randomly drawn sample of 2,000 HR professionals drawn from the Data HQ business lists database of over 17,000 HR professionals. Data HQ specialise in Business Mailing Lists across all industry sectors and can provide lists of named individuals with accompanying email addresses for those with senior level responsibility for HR

### **Sample selection**

The samples were selected to ensure the representativeness of the results in line with the business population in England. Using the following criteria drawn from the ONS Business Population Statistics.

- Employer size – proportionate number of employers in the 2-9, 10-49, 50-99, 100-249 and 250+ employee sizeband brackets. Calculated using the percentage on employment that each size bands represents rather than the number of enterprises within each
- Sector – broad sector ensuring coverage across the private, public and third/voluntary sector

### **Achieved sample size and weighting**

The achieved sample size and breakdown of the employer sample by key characteristics and associated weighting factors is shown in table 5:

**Table 5: Summary of achieved employer sample and weighting scheme**

	Employer sample		Employer sample	
	Unweighted base	Weighted base	Smallest weight factor	Largest weight factor
	274	274		
Size				
2-9 employees	13	38	2.5	3.0
10-49 employees	35	38	0.9	1.1
50-99 employees	29	16	0.5	0.8
100-249 employees	52	19	0.3	0.5
250+ employees	145	162	0.9	1.4
Sector				
Private sector	202	200	0.4	3.0
Public sector	48	58	0.5	1.4
Third/voluntary sector	24	16	0.3	2.5

## HEI sample

### Sample coverage

The HEI sample was designed to be representative of the English university population by university type. The type of university was drawn from official HESA statistics and universities who responded to the survey were grouped into the following categories:

- Russell group
- Other old
- Post 1992/new
- Other HEI

The sample definition ensured that only those in academic roles with responsibility for and knowledge of the admissions process were eligible to complete the survey.

### Sample frame

The HEI sample was drawn from two sources:

- The YouGov education panel
- HEIs with contacts drawn from the Oscar Research data base of public sector contacts. Oscar Research are the UK Public Sector database specialists. They research and provide the largest, and most accurate,

database of Government and Public Sector contacts and organisations in the UK.

### **Sample selection**

The samples were selected to ensure the representativeness of the results in line with the university population in England. Using university type. No further restrictions were placed on the sample but throughout the fieldwork period responses were monitored by job role and subject specialism to ensure broad coverage across these factors.

### **Achieved sample size and weighting**

The achieved sample size and breakdown of the HEI sample by key characteristics and associated weighting factors is shown in the table below:

**Table 6: Summary of achieved HEI sample and weighting scheme**

	HEI sample		HEI sample	
	Unweighted base	Weighted base	Smallest weight factor	Largest weight factor
	291	291		
Size				
Russell group	96	44	0.5	0.5
Other old	44	52	1.2	1.2
Post 1992/New	129	113	0.9	0.9
Other HEI	22	81	3.7	3.7

## Appendix C – Glossary

**Base size:** The number of respondents answering the question.

**BTEC:** These are qualifications offered across a range of vocational subjects and levels including business studies and engineering. For the purposes of this survey, these qualifications are included as part of the grouping termed ‘mixed qualifications’.

**Design effect:** Bias resulting from adjustments made to the sample to make it representative of the population.

**Effective base:** When sampling is undertaken, it creates a ‘design effect’ that can impact the reliability of the information collected. The effective base size is the base size that is left when removing this effect. It is used for significance testing.

**Freestanding mathematics (or freestanding maths):** A suite of mathematical qualifications available at Levels 1 to 3. They are often taken by students who have taken their GCSE maths a year early. For the purposes of this survey, these are included as part of the grouping termed ‘other academic qualifications’.

**General (academic) qualifications:** For the purpose of this survey, this type of qualification includes the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and the General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (A level).

- The GCSE is an academic qualification awarded in a specified subject, generally taken in a number of subjects by students aged 14 to 16 in secondary education in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- The A level is an academic qualification offered by educational bodies in the UK to students completing secondary or pre-university education. The qualification is generally studied for over two years and split into two parts, with one part studied in each year. The first part is known as the Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and was previously known as the Advanced Supplementary, with the same abbreviation. The second part is known as the A2 level. The AS is a qualification in its own right, and the AS combined with the A2 level forms the complete A level qualification.

**Grading:** The process of grouping students into overall performance categories (for example A\*, A, B, C, D, E, F, G).

**IB:** International Baccalaureate – a qualification studied by 16 to 19 year olds in which students learn six subjects: three at a standard level and three at a higher level. The qualification also includes an extended essay element. For the purposes of this survey, this qualification is included as part of the grouping termed ‘other academic qualifications’.

**Level 1/Level 2 qualifications also known as IGCSE:** regulated qualifications studied by 14 to 16 year olds as an alternative to a GCSE. For the purposes of this survey, these qualifications are included as part of the grouping termed ‘other academic qualifications’.

**Level of qualifications:** Qualifications are assigned a level from Entry then Level 1 through to Level 8:

**Entry includes entry-level certificates and foundation learning tier pathways.**

- Level 1 includes GCSEs graded D to G, the Foundation Diploma and Level 1 NVQs, Key Skills, Functional Skills and BTEC awards.
- Level 2 includes GCSEs graded A\* to C, the Higher Diploma and Level 2 NVQs, Key Skills, Functional Skills and BTEC awards.
- Level 3 includes AS/A levels, the Advanced and Progression Diplomas and Level 3 NVQs, Key Skills and BTEC awards.
- Level 4 includes certificates of higher education, Level 4 NVQs, Key Skills and BTEC Professional Awards.
- Level 5 includes diplomas of higher education, foundation degrees, the Higher National Diploma and BTEC professional awards.
- Level 6 includes bachelor degrees, graduate certificates, the National Diploma in Professional Production Skills and BTEC advanced professional awards.
- Level 7 includes master's degrees, postgraduate certificates and BTEC advanced professional awards.
- Level 8 includes doctorates.

**Marking:** The process of giving a student credit for their right answers according to the requirements set out in a mark scheme.

**Other academic qualifications:** For the purposes of this survey, these qualifications include Level 1/Level 2 qualifications also known as IGCSEs, the International Baccalaureate, the Pre-U and Freestanding Maths. They are defined as qualifications that are taught in schools and colleges to young people aged 14 to 19 that include academic content but are not GCSEs or A levels.

**Pre-U:** The Pre-U is a qualification for 16 to 19 year olds designed as an alternative to the current A level qualification. For the purposes of this survey, this qualification is included as part of the grouping termed 'other academic qualifications'.

**Rebasing:** This is the process of recalculating percentages for a question with some respondents removed from the total base. For example an approach is to remove those people who did not know from the percentage calculation and rebase to just those who offered an opinion.

**Sample frame:** The way that the population is structured before a sample for the survey is drawn.

**Sampling tolerances:** When using a sample for a survey rather than surveying the whole population, results can be expected to differ slightly. The difference between the two is known as the sampling tolerance and is established by ascertaining the standard deviation. For the purposes of this survey, the tolerance (or confidence level) used is at the 95 per cent level.

**Social grade:** Is a system of demographic classification. They were originally developed by the National Readership Survey to classify readers, but are now used as a standard for market research

**Statistically significant:** If a result is termed statistically significant, it is unlikely to have occurred randomly. The process of determining whether a result is statistically significant is known as significance testing.

**Stratified sample:** A sample that has been divided into subgroups – for example, regions or type of institution. These subgroups may all consist of equal numbers or some might be higher or lower than others.

**Vocational qualifications:** These are qualifications that are taught in schools and colleges that prepare students for a particular type of job.

**Weighting:** The process of making some respondents in a survey more or less important than others to accurately reflect their position in the population being surveyed.

## Appendix D – Questionnaires

32.1.10 This appendix contains the questions that were asked of each group of respondents. While the vast majority of questions are consistent between the six questionnaires (and seven groups), specific questions were tailored to the particular audience.

32.1.11 The details below represent the text that was given to the recipients. In addition, there was a degree of routing in the questionnaires so that further questions were not asked of people for whom it was not relevant. These routing instructions have been excluded from what follows for reasons of clarity.

32.1.12 Questions numbered with an S (for example S3) are screening questions to determine whether a respondent is from the correct audience.

### 33 Questionnaire for teachers and headteachers

33.1.1 Both teachers and headteachers were asked to complete the same series of questions.

#### Base: All

**[s3] Which ONE of the following best describes your current professional role?**

- Head teacher/Principal
- Deputy Head teacher/Principal
- Classroom or subject teacher/Lecturer
- Head of Department/subject
- Other teaching staff
- Other non-teaching staff
- Other (open question)
- None of these
- I do not work in education

#### Base: All

**[s8] Which of the following BEST describes the part of the country you work in?**

- Eastern England
- East Midlands
- London
- North-west England
- North-east England
- South-west England
- South-east England
- West Midlands
- Yorkshire and Humberside
- Scotland
- Wales
- Northern Ireland
- Channel Islands

#### Base: All

**[s3b] Which of the following BEST describes the phase or type of education you work in?**

- Early Years
- Primary
- Secondary
- Post-16 sixth form college
- Post-16 FE College
- Higher education

**Base: All**

**[s1] {multiple} Which of the following qualifications do you currently teach? (Please choose all that apply) (Please click on the icon if you want to see an explanation. Please click the icon again to remove the explanation)**

- Applied qualifications that include both an academic and vocational component
- AS level
- A2 level
- GCSEs
- Other academic qualifications for 14 - 19 year olds
- Vocational qualifications
- None of these
- Do not teach

**Base: Asked to those who teach other academic qualifications for 14 – 19 year olds**

**[s2] {multiple} You said that you teach other academic qualifications, which do you teach? (Please choose all that apply)**

- BTEC (Level 1/2)
- BTEC (Level 3)
- Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2)
- Cambridge Nationals (Level 3)
- Freestanding Maths
- International A levels
- Level 1/2 Certificate (more commonly known as IGCSE)
- The International Baccalaureate / IBacc / IB Middle Years Programme
- The International Baccalaureate / IBacc / IB Diploma Programme
- The Pre-U
- Other (open question)

**Base: All**

**[s4] How many years teaching experience do you have?**

NQT/first year of teaching

- 1-3 years
- 4-7 years
- 8-15 years
- 16 years and over

**Base: All**

**[s5] {multiple} Which, if any, of the following categories of subjects do you teach? (Please choose all that apply) (Please click on the icon if you want to see an explanation. Please click the icon again to remove the explanation)**

- Art, music or drama
- Design technology

- English
- IT
- Languages
- Maths
- Science
- EBacc humanities
- Non-Ebacc humanities
- Other (open question)

**Base: All**

**[s6] Which of the following BEST describes the school/college you work at?**

- Community
- Voluntary aided
- Voluntary controlled
- Foundation
- Free school
- Academy
- Independent/private school
- FE College
- Other (open question)

**Base: All**

**[s7] How many students are at your school?**

- 0-800
- 801-1,200
- 1,201+
- Don't know

## Awareness of Ofqual

This section asks about whether you have heard of Ofqual and how much you understand about its role.

**Base: All**

**[q1] Which of the following statements best describes your knowledge of Ofqual?**

- Know a lot about Ofqual
- Know a fair amount about Ofqual
- Know just a little about Ofqual
- Heard of but know nothing about Ofqual
- Never heard of Ofqual

**Base: All**

**[q2] Ofqual is the independent Regulator of qualifications, examinations and assessments in England and vocational qualifications in Northern Ireland. The aim of Ofqual is to make sure that learners get the results they deserve, and that the qualifications they receive count, both now and in the future.**

**Before today, were you aware that Ofqual is the independent Regulator of qualifications, examinations and assessments in England?**

- Yes, I was aware of this
- No, I was not aware of this

## Perceptions of Ofqual

This section asks about your perceptions of Ofqual.

**Base: Asked to all who are aware of Ofqual**

**[q3] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

- [q3\_1] Ofqual communicates information well
- [q3\_2] Ofqual is a trusted organisation
- [q3\_3] Ofqual is too close to government
- [q3\_4] Ofqual has a negative reputation

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## Perceptions of A level qualifications

This section asks about your perceptions of A level qualifications.

**Base: All**

**[q4] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

- [q4\_1] A levels are well understood by people
- [q4\_2] A levels are a trusted qualification
- [q4\_3] A level standards are maintained year on year
- [q4\_4] A levels are good preparation for further study
- [q4\_5] A levels are good preparation for work
- [q4\_6] A levels develop a broad range of skills for students
- [q4\_7] The marking of A levels is accurate
- [q4\_8] A levels put too much stress on teachers
- [q4\_9] A levels put too much stress on students
- [q4\_10] The exam period for A levels is too short/congested
- [q4\_11] Compared to last year I am less confident in the A level system
- [q4\_12] Compared to last year the accuracy of marking of A levels has deteriorated
- [q4\_13] There is too much change in the A level system

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## Perceptions of A level reform

This section asks about your perceptions of A level reform. AS and A levels are currently being reformed. New AS and A levels will be taught in schools in England from September 2015. The first results for the new AS levels will be in 2016, and for the A levels in 2017. Further subjects will be introduced over the following two years.

### Base: All

[q5] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Please click on the icon below if you want to see an explanation of the term. Please click the icon again to remove the explanation)

- [q5\_1] The move to linear end of course assessment is a bad thing at A level
- [q5\_2] The disadvantages of decoupling the AS from the A level outweigh the advantages
- [q5\_3] The reduction in teacher assessment in some A level subjects is a good thing
- [q5\_4] A levels needed reform

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## Perceptions of GCSE qualifications

This section asks about your perceptions of GCSE qualifications

### Base: All

[q6] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- [q6\_1] GCSEs are well understood by people
- [q6\_2] GCSEs are a trusted qualification
- [q6\_3] GCSE standards are maintained year on year
- [q6\_4] GCSEs are good preparation for further study
- [q6\_5] GCSEs are good preparation for work
- [q6\_6] GCSEs develop a broad range of skills for students
- [q6\_7] The marking of GCSEs is accurate
- [q6\_8] GCSEs put too much stress on teachers
- [q6\_9] GCSEs put too much stress on students
- [q6\_10] The exam period for GCSEs is too short/congested
- [q6\_11] Compared to last year I am less confident in the GCSE system
- [q6\_12] Compared to last year the accuracy of marking of GCSEs has deteriorated
- [q6\_13] There is too much change in the GCSE system

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## Perceptions of GCSE reform

This section asks about your perceptions of GCSE reform. GCSEs are currently being reformed. New GCSEs in English language, English literature and maths will be taught in schools in England from September 2015, with the first results issued in August 2017. Further subjects will see new GCSEs introduced over the following two years.

### Base: All

[q7] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Please click on the icon below if you want to see an explanation of the term. Please click the icon again to remove the explanation)

- [q7\_1] I understand the new 9-1 grading scale to be used in new GCSEs
- [q7\_2] The move to linear end of course assessment is a bad thing at GCSE
- [q7\_3] The removal of tiering (where possible) is a bad thing
- [q7\_4] The reduction in teacher assessment in GCSE is a good thing
- [q7\_5] GCSEs needed reform

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

### Base: All

[q8a] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

- [q8a\_1] The enquiries about results / appeals system is fair

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## Perceptions of alternative qualifications

This section asks about your perceptions of alternative qualifications. For example, Level 1/2 Certificates (often referred to as IGCSEs) or the International Baccalaureate qualifications.

### Base: All

[q9\_s] {multiple} Which of the following qualifications, if any, are you aware of? (Please tick all that apply)

- BTECs (Level 1/2)
- BTECs (Level 3)
- Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2)
- Cambridge Nationals (Level 3)
- International A levels
- Level 1/2 Certificates (more commonly known as IGCSEs)
- The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme
- The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme

- The Pre-U
- None of these

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9a] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

- [q9a\_1] International A levels are equivalent in challenge to A levels
- [q9a\_2] The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is equivalent in challenge to A levels
- [q9a\_3] The Pre-U is equivalent in challenge to A levels
- [q9a\_4] BTECs (Level 3) are equivalent in challenge to A levels
- [q9a\_5] Cambridge Nationals (Level 3) are equivalent in challenge to A levels

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9b] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

- [q9b\_1] IGCSEs are equivalent in challenge to GCSEs
- [q9b\_2] The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme is equivalent in challenge to GCSEs
- [q9b\_3] BTECs (Level 1/2) are equivalent in challenge to GCSEs
- [q9b\_4] Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2) are equivalent in challenge to GCSEs

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9c] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

- [q9c\_1] International A levels are good preparation for further study
- [q9c\_2] The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is good preparation for further study
- [q9c\_3] The Pre-U is good preparation for further study
- [q9c\_4] BTECs (Level 3) are good preparation for further study
- [q9c\_5] Cambridge Nationals (Level 3) are good preparation for further study

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9d] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

- [q9d\_1] IGCSEs are good preparation for further study
- [q9d\_2] The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme is good preparation for further study
- [q9d\_3] BTECs (Level 1/2) are good preparation for further study
- [q9d\_4] Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2) are good preparation for further study

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9e] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

- [q9e\_1] International A levels are valued as highly as A levels by Higher Education
- [q9e\_2] The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is valued as highly as A levels by Higher Education
- [q9e\_3] The Pre-U is valued as highly as A levels by Higher Education
- [q9e\_4] BTECs (Level 3) are valued as highly as A levels by Higher Education
- [q9e\_5] Cambridge Nationals (Level 3) are valued as highly as A levels by Higher Education

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9f] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

- [q9f\_1] IGCSEs are valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education
- [q9f\_2] The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme is valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education
- [q9f\_3] BTECs (Level 1/2) are valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education
- [q9f\_4] Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2) are valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9g] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

- [q9g\_1] International A levels are valued as highly as A levels by employers
- [q9g\_2] The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is valued as highly as A levels by employers
- [q9g\_3] The Pre-U is valued as highly as A levels by employers

-[q9g\_4] BTECs (Level 3) are valued as highly as A levels by employers

-[q9g\_5] Cambridge Nationals (Level 3) are valued as highly as A levels by employers

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9h] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

-[q9h\_1] IGCSEs are valued as highly as GCSEs by employers

-[q9h\_2] The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme is valued as highly as GCSEs by employers

-[q9h\_3] BTECs (Level 1/2) are valued as highly as GCSEs by employers

-[q9h\_4] Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2) are valued as highly as GCSEs by employers

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## 34 Questionnaire for students

### Base: All

**[s2] {multiple} Are you currently in Years 10 or 11 at school and intending to take any of the following qualifications in the future? (Please tick all that apply)**

- Yes - A level
- Yes - BTEC (Level 1/2)
- Yes - BTEC (Level 3)
- Yes - Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2)
- Yes - Cambridge Nationals (Level 3)
- Yes - Freestanding Maths
- Yes - GCSE
- Yes - International A levels
- Yes - Level 1/2 Certificate (more commonly known as IGCSE)
- Yes - The International Baccalaureate / IBacc / IB Middle Years Programme
- Yes - The International Baccalaureate / IBacc / IB Diploma Programme
- Yes - The Pre-U
- No
- Don't know

### Base: Asked to all young people

**[s3] {multiple} Are you currently studying for one or more of the following qualifications? (Please tick all that apply)**

- Yes - A level
- Yes - BTEC (Level 1/2)
- Yes - BTEC (Level 3)
- Yes - Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2)
- Yes - Cambridge Nationals (Level 3)
- Yes - Freestanding Maths
- Yes - GCSE
- Yes - International A levels
- Yes - Level 1/2 Certificate (more commonly known as IGCSE)
- Yes - The International Baccalaureate / IBacc / IB Middle Years Programme
- Yes - The International Baccalaureate / IBacc / IB Diploma Programme
- Yes - The Pre-U
- No
- Don't know

### Base: Asked to all young people

**[s4] {multiple} Have you completed one or more of the following qualifications within the last two years? (Please tick all that apply)**

- Yes - A level
- Yes - BTEC (Level 1/2)
- Yes - BTEC (Level 3)
- Yes - Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2)
- Yes - Cambridge Nationals (Level 3)
- Yes - Freestanding Maths
- Yes - GCSE
- Yes - International A levels
- Yes - Level 1/2 Certificate (more commonly known as IGCSE)

- Yes - The International Baccalaureate / IBacc / IB Middle Years Programme
- Yes - The International Baccalaureate / IBacc / IB Diploma Programme
- Yes - The Pre-U
- No
- Don't know

## Awareness of Ofqual

This section asks about whether you have heard of Ofqual and how much you understand about its role.

**Base: All**

**[q1] Which of the following statements best describes your knowledge of Ofqual?**

- Know a lot about Ofqual
- Know a fair amount about Ofqual
- Know just a little about Ofqual
- Heard of but know nothing about Ofqual
- Never heard of Ofqual

**Base: All**

**[q2] Ofqual is the independent Regulator of qualifications, examinations and assessments in England and vocational qualifications in Northern Ireland. The aim of Ofqual is to make sure that learners get the results they deserve, and that the qualifications they receive count, both now and in the future.**

**Before today, were you aware that Ofqual is the independent Regulator of qualifications, examinations and assessments in England?**

- Yes, I was aware of this
- No, I was not aware of this

## Perceptions of Ofqual

This section asks about your perceptions of Ofqual.

**Base: Asked to all who are aware of Ofqual**

**[q3] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

- [q3\_1] Ofqual communicates information well
- [q3\_2] Ofqual is a trusted organisation
- [q3\_3] Ofqual is too close to government
- [q3\_4] Ofqual has a negative reputation

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## Perceptions of A level qualifications

This section asks about your perceptions of A level qualifications.

**Base: All**

**[q4] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

- [q4\_1] A levels are well understood by people
- [q4\_2] A levels are a trusted qualification
- [q4\_3] A level standards are maintained year on year
- [q4\_4] A levels are good preparation for further study
- [q4\_5] A levels are good preparation for work
- [q4\_6] A levels develop a broad range of skills for students
- [q4\_7] The marking of A levels is accurate
- [q4\_8] A levels put too much stress on teachers
- [q4\_9] A levels put too much stress on students
- [q4\_10] The exam period for A levels is too short/congested
- [q4\_11] Compared to last year I am less confident in the A level system
- [q4\_12] Compared to last year the accuracy of marking of A levels has deteriorated
- [q4\_13] There is too much change in the A level system

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## Perceptions of A level reform

This section asks about your perceptions of A level reform. AS and A levels are currently being reformed. New AS and A levels will be taught in schools in England from September 2015. The first results for the new AS levels will be in 2016, and for the A levels in 2017. Further subjects will be introduced over the following two years.

**Base: All**

**[q5] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Please click on the icon below if you want to see an explanation of the term. Please click the icon again to remove the explanation)**

- [q5\_1] The move to linear end of course assessment is a bad thing at A level
- [q5\_2] The disadvantages of decoupling the AS from the A level outweigh the advantages
- [q5\_3] The reduction in teacher assessment in some A level subjects is a good thing
- [q5\_4] A levels needed reform

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## Perceptions of GCSE qualifications

This section asks about your perceptions of GCSE qualifications

**Base: All**

**[q6] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

- [q6\_1] GCSEs are well understood by people
- [q6\_2] GCSEs are a trusted qualification
- [q6\_3] GCSE standards are maintained year on year
- [q6\_4] GCSEs are good preparation for further study
- [q6\_5] GCSEs are good preparation for work
- [q6\_6] GCSEs develop a broad range of skills for students
- [q6\_7] The marking of GCSEs is accurate
- [q6\_8] GCSEs put too much stress on teachers
- [q6\_9] GCSEs put too much stress on students
- [q6\_10] The exam period for GCSEs is too short/congested
- [q6\_11] Compared to last year I am less confident in the GCSE system
- [q6\_12] Compared to last year the accuracy of marking of GCSEs has deteriorated
- [q6\_13] There is too much change in the GCSE system

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## Perceptions of GCSE reform

This section asks about your perceptions of GCSE reform. GCSEs are currently being reformed. New GCSEs in English language, English literature and maths will be taught in schools in England from September 2015, with the first results issued in August 2017. Further subjects will see new GCSEs introduced over the following two years.

**Base: All**

**[q7] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Please click on the icon below if you want to see an explanation of the term. Please click the icon again to remove the explanation)**

- [q7\_1] I understand the new 9-1 grading scale to be used in new GCSEs
- [q7\_2] < The move to linear end of course assessment is a bad thing at GCSE
- [q7\_3] The removal of tiering (where possible) is a bad thing
- [q7\_4] The reduction in teacher assessment in GCSE is a good thing
- [q7\_5] GCSEs needed reform

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree

- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: All**

**[q8a] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?**

- [q8a\_1] The enquiries about results / appeals system is fair

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## Perceptions of alternative qualifications

This section asks about your perceptions of alternative qualifications. For example, Level 1/2 Certificates (often referred to as IGCSEs) or the International Baccalaureate qualifications.

**Base: All**

**[q9\_s] {multiple} Which of the following qualifications, if any, are you aware of? (Please tick all that apply)**

- BTECs (Level 1/2)
- BTECs (Level 3)
- Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2)
- Cambridge Nationals (Level 3)
- International A levels
- Level 1/2 Certificates (more commonly known as IGCSEs)
- The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme
- The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme
- The Pre-U
- None of these

**Base: Asked to all who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9a] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

-[q9a\_1] International A levels are equivalent in challenge to A levels

-[q9a\_2] The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is equivalent in challenge to A levels

-[q9a\_3] The Pre-U is equivalent in challenge to A levels

-[q9a\_4] BTECs (Level 3) are equivalent in challenge to A levels

-[q9a\_5] Cambridge Nationals (Level 3) are equivalent in challenge to A levels

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to all who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9b] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

-[q9b\_1] IGCSEs are equivalent in challenge to GCSEs

-[q9b\_2] The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme is equivalent in challenge to GCSEs

-[q9b\_3] BTECs (Level 1/2) are equivalent in challenge to GCSEs

-[q9b\_4] Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2) are equivalent in challenge to GCSEs

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to all who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9c]{grid roworder=randomize}To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

-[q9c\_1] International A levels are good preparation for further study

-[q9c\_2] The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is good preparation for further study

-[q9c\_3] The Pre-U is good preparation for further study

-[q9c\_4] BTECs (Level 3) are good preparation for further study

-[q9c\_5] Cambridge Nationals (Level 3) are good preparation for further study

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to all who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9d] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

-[q9d\_1] IGCSEs are good preparation for further study

-[q9d\_2] The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme is good preparation for further study

-[q9d\_3] BTECs (Level 1/2) are good preparation for further study

-[q9d\_4] Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2) are good preparation for further study

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to all who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9e] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

-[q9e\_1] International A levels are valued as highly as A levels by Higher Education

-[q9e\_2] The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is valued as highly as A levels by Higher Education

-[q9e\_3] The Pre-U is valued as highly as A levels by Higher Education

-[q9e\_4] BTECs (Level 3) are valued as highly as A levels by Higher Education

-[q9e\_5] Cambridge Nationals (Level 3) are valued as highly as A levels by Higher Education

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to all who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9f] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

-[q9f\_1] IGCSEs are valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education

-[q9f\_2] The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme is valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education

-[q9f\_3] BTECs (Level 1/2) are valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education

-[q9f\_4] Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2) are valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to all who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9g] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

-[q9g\_1] International A levels are valued as highly as A levels by employers

-[q9g\_2] The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is valued as highly as A levels by employers

-[q9g\_3] The Pre-U is valued as highly as A levels by employers

-[q9g\_4] BTECs (Level 3) are valued as highly as A levels by employers

-[q9g\_5] Cambridge Nationals (Level 3) are valued as highly as A levels by employers

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to all who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9h] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

-[q9h\_1] IGCSEs are valued as highly as GCSEs by employers

-[q9h\_2] The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme is valued as highly as GCSEs by employers

-[q9h\_3] BTECs (Level 1/2) are valued as highly as GCSEs by employers

-[q9h\_4] Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2) are valued as highly as GCSEs by employers

- Strongly agree
- Agree

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## 35 Questionnaire for parents

### Base: All

[S5] {multiple} Do you have children in any the following age groups? (Please tick all that apply)

- 0-4
- 5-9
- 10-13
- 14-19
- Children aged 20 or older
- I don't have any children

### Base: All

[S2\_2015] {multiple} Do you have a child who is currently in years 10 or 11 at school (aged 14-16) and intends to take any of the following qualifications in the future? (Please tick all that apply)

- Yes - A level
- Yes - BTEC (Level 1/2)
- Yes - BTEC (Level 3)
- Yes - Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2)
- Yes -Cambridge Nationals (Level 3)
- Yes - Freestanding Maths
- Yes - GCSE
- Yes - International A levels
- Yes - Level 1/2 Certificate (more commonly known as IGCSE)
- Yes - The International Baccalaureate / IBacc / IB Middle Years Programme
- Yes - The International Baccalaureate / IBacc / IB Diploma Programme
- Yes - The Pre-U
- No
- Don't know

### Base: All

[S3\_2015]{multiple} Do you have a child who is \_currently studying\_ any of the following qualifications? (Please tick all that apply)

- Yes - A level
- Yes - BTEC (Level 1/2)
- Yes - BTEC (Level 3)
- Yes - Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2)
- Yes -Cambridge Nationals (Level 3)
- Yes - Freestanding Maths
- Yes - GCSE
- Yes - International A levels
- Yes - Level 1/2 Certificate (more commonly known as IGCSE)
- Yes - The International Baccalaureate / IBacc / IB Middle Years Programme
- Yes - The International Baccalaureate / IBacc / IB Diploma Programme
- Yes - The Pre-U
- No
- Don't know

**Base: All**

**[S6\_2015]{multiple} Do you have a child who \_already has\_ any of the following qualifications?  
(Please tick all that apply)**

- Yes - A level
- Yes - BTEC (Level 1/2)
- Yes - BTEC (Level 3)
- Yes - Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2)
- Yes - Cambridge Nationals (Level 3)
- Yes - Freestanding Maths
- Yes - GCSE
- Yes - International A levels
- Yes - Level 1/2 Certificate (more commonly known as IGCSE)
- Yes - The International Baccalaureate / IBacc / IB Middle Years Programme
- Yes - The International Baccalaureate / IBacc / IB Diploma Programme
- Yes - The Pre-U
- No
- Don't know

## **Awareness of Ofqual**

**This section asks about whether you have heard of Ofqual and how much you understand about its role.**

**Base: All**

**[q1] Which of the following statements best describes your knowledge of Ofqual?**

- Know a lot about Ofqual
- Know a fair amount about Ofqual
- Know just a little about Ofqual
- Heard of but know nothing about Ofqual
- Never heard of Ofqual

**Base: All**

**[q2] Ofqual is the independent Regulator of qualifications, examinations and assessments in England and vocational qualifications in Northern Ireland. The aim of Ofqual is to make sure that learners get the results they deserve, and that the qualifications they receive count, both now and in the future.**

**Before today, were you aware that Ofqual is the independent Regulator of qualifications, examinations and assessments in England?**

- Yes, I was aware of this
- No, I was not aware of this

## **Perceptions of Ofqual**

**This section asks about your perceptions of Ofqual.**

**Base: Asked to all who are aware of Ofqual**

**[q3] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

- [q3\_1] Ofqual communicates information well
- [q3\_2] Ofqual is a trusted organisation
- [q3\_3] Ofqual is too close to government
- [q3\_4] Ofqual has a negative reputation

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## Perceptions of A level qualifications

This section asks about your perceptions of A level qualifications.

**Base: All**

**[q4] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

- [q4\_1] A levels are well understood by people
- [q4\_2] A levels are a trusted qualification
- [q4\_3] A level standards are maintained year on year
- [q4\_4] A levels are good preparation for further study
- [q4\_5] A levels are good preparation for work
- [q4\_6] A levels develop a broad range of skills for students
- [q4\_7] The marking of A levels is accurate
- [q4\_8] A levels put too much stress on teachers
- [q4\_9] A levels put too much stress on students
- [q4\_10] The exam period for A levels is too short/congested
- [q4\_11] Compared to last year I am less confident in the A level system
- [q4\_12] Compared to last year the accuracy of marking of A levels has deteriorated
- [q4\_13] There is too much change in the A level system

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## Perceptions of A level reform

This section asks about your perceptions of A level reform. AS and A levels are currently being reformed. New AS and A levels will be taught in schools in England from September 2015. The first results for the new AS levels will be in 2016, and for the A levels in 2017. Further subjects will be introduced over the following two years.

**Base: All**

**[q5] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Please click on the icon below if you want to see an explanation of the term. Please click the icon again to remove the explanation)**

- [q5\_1] The move to linear end of course assessment is a bad thing at A level
- [q5\_2] The disadvantages of decoupling the AS from the A level outweigh the advantages
- [q5\_3] The reduction in teacher assessment in some A level subjects is a good thing
- [q5\_4] A levels needed reform

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## Perceptions of GCSE qualifications

This section asks about your perceptions of GCSE qualifications

**Base: All**

**[q6] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

- [q6\_1] GCSEs are well understood by people
- [q6\_2] GCSEs are a trusted qualification
- [q6\_3] GCSE standards are maintained year on year
- [q6\_4] GCSEs are good preparation for further study
- [q6\_5] GCSEs are good preparation for work
- [q6\_6] GCSEs develop a broad range of skills for students
- [q6\_7] The marking of GCSEs is accurate
- [q6\_8] GCSEs put too much stress on teachers
- [q6\_9] GCSEs put too much stress on students
- [q6\_10] The exam period for GCSEs is too short/congested
- [q6\_11] Compared to last year I am less confident in the GCSE system
- [q6\_12] Compared to last year the accuracy of marking of GCSEs has deteriorated
- [q6\_13] There is too much change in the GCSE system

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## Perceptions of GCSE reform

This section asks about your perceptions of GCSE reform. GCSEs are currently being reformed. New GCSEs in English language, English literature and maths will be taught in schools in England

from September 2015, with the first results issued in August 2017. Further subjects will see new GCSEs introduced over the following two years.

**Base: All**

**[q7] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Please click on the icon below if you want to see an explanation of the term. Please click the icon again to remove the explanation)**

- [q7\_1] I understand the new 9-1 grading scale to be used in new GCSEs
- [q7\_2] < The move to linear end of course assessment is a bad thing at GCSE
- [q7\_3] The removal of tiering (where possible) is a bad thing
- [q7\_4] The reduction in teacher assessment in GCSE is a good thing
- [q7\_5] GCSEs needed reform

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: All**

**[q8a] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?**

- [q8a\_1] The enquiries about results / appeals system is fair

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## Perceptions of alternative qualifications

This section asks about your perceptions of alternative qualifications. For example, Level 1/2 Certificates (often referred to as IGCSEs) or the International Baccalaureate qualifications.

**Base: All**

**[q9\_s] {multiple} Which of the following qualifications, if any, are you aware of? (Please tick all that apply)**

- BTECs (Level 1/2)
- BTECs (Level 3)
- Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2)
- Cambridge Nationals (Level 3)
- International A levels
- Level 1/2 Certificates (more commonly known as IGCSEs)
- The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme
- The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme
- The Pre-U
- None of these

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9a] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

- [q9a\_1] International A levels are equivalent in challenge to A levels
- [q9a\_2] The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is equivalent in challenge to A levels
- [q9a\_3] The Pre-U is equivalent in challenge to A levels
- [q9a\_4] BTECs (Level 3) are equivalent in challenge to A levels
- [q9a\_5] Cambridge Nationals (Level 3) are equivalent in challenge to A levels

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9b] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

- [q9b\_1] IGCSEs are equivalent in challenge to GCSEs
- [q9b\_2] The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme is equivalent in challenge to GCSEs
- [q9b\_3] BTECs (Level 1/2) are equivalent in challenge to GCSEs
- [q9b\_4] Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2) are equivalent in challenge to GCSEs

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9c] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

- [q9c\_1] International A levels are good preparation for further study
- [q9c\_2] The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is good preparation for further study
- [q9c\_3] The Pre-U is good preparation for further study
- [q9c\_4] BTECs (Level 3) are good preparation for further study
- [q9c\_5] Cambridge Nationals (Level 3) are good preparation for further study

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9d] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

- [q9d\_1] IGCSEs are good preparation for further study
- [q9d\_2] The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme is good preparation for further study
- [q9d\_3] BTECs (Level 1/2) are good preparation for further study

-[q9d\_4] Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2) are good preparation for further study

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9e] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

-[q9e\_1] International A levels are valued as highly as A levels by Higher Education

-[q9e\_2] The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is valued as highly as A levels by Higher Education

-[q9e\_3] The Pre-U is valued as highly as A levels by Higher Education

-[q9e\_4] BTECs (Level 3) are valued as highly as A levels by Higher Education

-[q9e\_5] Cambridge Nationals (Level 3) are valued as highly as A levels by Higher Education

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9f] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

-[q9f\_1] IGCSEs are valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education

-[q9f\_2] The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme is valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education

-[q9f\_3] BTECs (Level 1/2) are valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education

-[q9f\_4] Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2) are valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9g] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

-[q9g\_1] International A levels are valued as highly as A levels by employers

-[q9g\_2] The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is valued as highly as A levels by employers

-[q9g\_3] The Pre-U is valued as highly as A levels by employers

-[q9g\_4] BTECs (Level 3) are valued as highly as A levels by employers

-[q9g\_5] Cambridge Nationals (Level 3) are valued as highly as A levels by employers

- Strongly agree

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9h] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

-[q9h\_1] IGCSEs are valued as highly as GCSEs by employers

-[q9h\_2] The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme is valued as highly as GCSEs by employers

-[q9h\_3] BTECs (Level 1/2) are valued as highly as GCSEs by employers

-[q9h\_4] Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2) are valued as highly as GCSEs by employers

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## 36 Questionnaire for general public

No screening questions were required for the general public sample as all respondents qualified for the survey.

### Awareness of Ofqual

This section asks about whether you have heard of Ofqual and how much you understand about its role.

**Base: All**

**[q1] Which of the following statements best describes your knowledge of Ofqual?**

- Know a lot about Ofqual
- Know a fair amount about Ofqual
- Know just a little about Ofqual
- Heard of but know nothing about Ofqual
- Never heard of Ofqual

**Base: All**

**[q2] Ofqual is the independent Regulator of qualifications, examinations and assessments in England and vocational qualifications in Northern Ireland. The aim of Ofqual is to make sure that learners get the results they deserve, and that the qualifications they receive count, both now and in the future.**

**Before today, were you aware that Ofqual is the independent Regulator of qualifications, examinations and assessments in England?**

- Yes, I was aware of this
- No, I was not aware of this

### Perceptions of Ofqual

This section asks about your perceptions of Ofqual.

**Base: Asked to all who are aware of Ofqual**

**[q3] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

- [q3\_1] Ofqual communicates information well
- [q3\_2] Ofqual is a trusted organisation
- [q3\_3] Ofqual is too close to government
- [q3\_4] Ofqual has a negative reputation

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## Perceptions of A level qualifications

This section asks about your perceptions of A level qualifications.

**Base: All**

**[q4] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

- [q4\_1] A levels are well understood by people
- [q4\_2] A levels are a trusted qualification
- [q4\_3] A level standards are maintained year on year
- [q4\_4] A levels are good preparation for further study
- [q4\_5] A levels are good preparation for work
- [q4\_6] A levels develop a broad range of skills for students
- [q4\_7] The marking of A levels is accurate
- [q4\_8] A levels put too much stress on teachers
- [q4\_9] A levels put too much stress on students
- [q4\_10] The exam period for A levels is too short/congested
- [q4\_11] Compared to last year I am less confident in the A level system
- [q4\_12] Compared to last year the accuracy of marking of A levels has deteriorated
- [q4\_13] There is too much change in the A level system

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## Perceptions of A level reform

This section asks about your perceptions of A level reform. AS and A levels are currently being reformed. New AS and A levels will be taught in schools in England from September 2015. The first results for the new AS levels will be in 2016, and for the A levels in 2017. Further subjects will be introduced over the following two years.

**Base: All**

**[q5] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Please click on the icon below if you want to see an explanation of the term. Please click the icon again to remove the explanation)**

- [q5\_1] The move to linear end of course assessment is a bad thing at A level
- [q5\_2] The disadvantages of decoupling the AS from the A level outweigh the advantages
- [q5\_3] The reduction in teacher assessment in some A level subjects is a good thing
- [q5\_4] A levels needed reform

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## Perceptions of GCSE qualifications

This section asks about your perceptions of GCSE qualifications

**Base: All**

**[q6] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

- [q6\_1] GCSEs are well understood by people
- [q6\_2] GCSEs are a trusted qualification
- [q6\_3] GCSE standards are maintained year on year
- [q6\_4] GCSEs are good preparation for further study
- [q6\_5] GCSEs are good preparation for work
- [q6\_6] GCSEs develop a broad range of skills for students
- [q6\_7] The marking of GCSEs is accurate
- [q6\_8] GCSEs put too much stress on teachers
- [q6\_9] GCSEs put too much stress on students
- [q6\_10] The exam period for GCSEs is too short/congested
- [q6\_11] Compared to last year I am less confident in the GCSE system
- [q6\_12] Compared to last year the accuracy of marking of GCSEs has deteriorated
- [q6\_13] There is too much change in the GCSE system

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## Perceptions of GCSE reform

This section asks about your perceptions of GCSE reform. GCSEs are currently being reformed. New GCSEs in English language, English literature and maths will be taught in schools in England from September 2015, with the first results issued in August 2017. Further subjects will see new GCSEs introduced over the following two years.

**Base: All**

**[q7] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Please click on the icon below if you want to see an explanation of the term. Please click the icon again to remove the explanation)**

- [q7\_1] I understand the new 9-1 grading scale to be used in new GCSEs
- [q7\_2] < The move to linear end of course assessment is a bad thing at GCSE
- [q7\_3] The removal of tiering (where possible) is a bad thing
- [q7\_4] The reduction in teacher assessment in GCSE is a good thing
- [q7\_5] GCSEs needed reform

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree

- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: All**

**[q8a] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?**

- [q8a\_1] The enquiries about results / appeals system is fair

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## Perceptions of alternative qualifications

This section asks about your perceptions of alternative qualifications. For example, Level 1/2 Certificates (often referred to as IGCSEs) or the International Baccalaureate qualifications.

**Base: All**

**[q9\_s] {multiple} Which of the following qualifications, if any, are you aware of? (Please tick all that apply)**

- BTECs (Level 1/2)
- BTECs (Level 3)
- Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2)
- Cambridge Nationals (Level 3)
- International A levels
- Level 1/2 Certificates (more commonly known as IGCSEs)
- The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme
- The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme
- The Pre-U
- None of these

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9a] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

-[q9a\_1] International A levels are equivalent in challenge to A levels

-[q9a\_2] The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is equivalent in challenge to A levels

-[q9a\_3] The Pre-U is equivalent in challenge to A levels

-[q9a\_4] BTECs (Level 3) are equivalent in challenge to A levels

-[q9a\_5] Cambridge Nationals (Level 3) are equivalent in challenge to A levels

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9b] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

-[q9b\_1] IGCSEs are equivalent in challenge to GCSEs

-[q9b\_2] The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme is equivalent in challenge to GCSEs

-[q9b\_3] BTECs (Level 1/2) are equivalent in challenge to GCSEs

-[q9b\_4] Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2) are equivalent in challenge to GCSEs

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9c] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

-[q9c\_1] International A levels are good preparation for further study

-[q9c\_2] The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is good preparation for further study

-[q9c\_3] The Pre-U is good preparation for further study

-[q9c\_4] BTECs (Level 3) are good preparation for further study

-[q9c\_5] Cambridge Nationals (Level 3) are good preparation for further study

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9d] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

-[q9d\_1] IGCSEs are good preparation for further study

-[q9d\_2] The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme is good preparation for further study

-[q9d\_3] BTECs (Level 1/2) are good preparation for further study

-[q9d\_4] Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2) are good preparation for further study

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9e] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

-[q9e\_1] International A levels are valued as highly as A levels by Higher Education

-[q9e\_2] The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is valued as highly as A levels by Higher Education

-[q9e\_3] The Pre-U is valued as highly as A levels by Higher Education

-[q9e\_4] BTECs (Level 3) are valued as highly as A levels by Higher Education

-[q9e\_5] Cambridge Nationals (Level 3) are valued as highly as A levels by Higher Education

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9f] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

- [q9f\_1] IGCSEs are valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education
- [q9f\_2] The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme is valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education
- [q9f\_3] BTECs (Level 1/2) are valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education
- [q9f\_4] Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2) are valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9g] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

- [q9g\_1] International A levels are valued as highly as A levels by employers
- [q9g\_2] The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is valued as highly as A levels by employers
- [q9g\_3] The Pre-U is valued as highly as A levels by employers
- [q9g\_4] BTECs (Level 3) are valued as highly as A levels by employers
- [q9g\_5] Cambridge Nationals (Level 3) are valued as highly as A levels by employers

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9h] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

- [q9h\_1] IGCSEs are valued as highly as GCSEs by employers
- [q9h\_2] The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme is valued as highly as GCSEs by employers
- [q9h\_3] BTECs (Level 1/2) are valued as highly as GCSEs by employers
- [q9h\_4] Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2) are valued as highly as GCSEs by employers

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree

- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## 37 Questionnaire for employers

### Base: All

#### [S1] Which of these applies to you?

- Working full time (30 or more hours per week)
- Working part time (8-29 hours a week)
- Working part time (Less than 8 hours a week)
- Full time student
- Retired
- Unemployed
- Not working
- Other

### Base: All

#### [S2] {multiple}Which, if any, of the following areas/ departments describe the role(s) you perform? If you perform more than one role, for example a financial and HR role, please tick BOTH answer options.

- HR (including admin and learning and development)
- Finance and accounts
- Customer services
- IT Support
- Marketing
- Productions / operations
- Research and Development
- Sales
- Other
- Don't know

### Base: All

#### [S4] Has your organisation recruited any young people (aged 16-25) in the past 12 months?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

### Base: All

#### [S5] What level of management responsibility do you hold in your current position?

- Owner/ Proprietor
- Partner
- Chairperson
- Chief Executive
- Managing Director
- Non Executive Director
- Other board level manager/ director
- Other senior manager or director below board level
- Middle manager
- Junior manager/ team leader/ supervisor
- Other
- Not applicable - I don't have any management responsibility

**Base: All**

**[S6] How many people, including yourself, are employed by your organisation in the UK?**

- 1 (Just me)
- 2-9
- 10-49
- 50-99
- 100-249
- 250-499
- 500-999
- 1,000-1,999
- 2,000-4,999
- 5,000-9,999
- 10,000-19,999
- 20,000 or more

**Base: All**

**[S7] In which area of the UK is the organisation you work for based? (If your organisation covers more than one region please select where the head office of your organisation is located).**

- Eastern England
- East Midlands
- London
- North-west England
- North-east England
- South-west England
- South-east England
- West Midlands
- Yorkshire and Humberside
- Scotland
- Wales
- Northern Ireland
- Channel Islands
- Abroad

**Base: All**

**[S8] What kind of organisation do you work for?**

- Private sector - profit-seeking (e.g. public limited company, partnership)
- Public sector - government owned or funded (e.g. civil service, local government, NHS, university)
- Third sector - non-profit, non-governmental (e.g. charity, social enterprise)
- Don't know
- Not applicable

**Base: All**

**[S9] In which specific sector does your business or organisation primarily operate?**

- Agriculture, forestry and fishing
- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Mining and extraction

- Energy and water supply
- Primary and secondary schools
- Further and higher education
- NHS
- Other private healthcare
- Voluntary and not-for-profit sectors
- Hotels, catering and leisure
- IT industry
- Transport and storage
- Information and communication
- Consultancy services
- Finance, insurance and real estate
- Wholesale and motortrade
- Retail
- Professional, Scientific and Technical
- Administrative and support service activities
- Other business services
- Public administration – central government
- Public administration – local government, including fire services
- Armed forces
- Quango

## Awareness of Ofqual

This section asks about whether you have heard of Ofqual and how much you understand about its role.

**Base: All**

**[q1] Which of the following statements best describes your knowledge of Ofqual?**

- Know a lot about Ofqual
- Know a fair amount about Ofqual
- Know just a little about Ofqual
- Heard of but know nothing about Ofqual
- Never heard of Ofqual

**Base: All**

**[q2] Ofqual is the independent Regulator of qualifications, examinations and assessments in England and vocational qualifications in Northern Ireland. The aim of Ofqual is to make sure that learners get the results they deserve, and that the qualifications they receive count, both now and in the future.**

**Before today, were you aware that Ofqual is the independent Regulator of qualifications, examinations and assessments in England?**

- Yes, I was aware of this
- No, I was not aware of this

## Perceptions of Ofqual

This section asks about your perceptions of Ofqual.

**Base: Asked to all who are aware of Ofqual**

**[q3] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

- [q3\_1] Ofqual communicates information well
- [q3\_2] Ofqual is a trusted organisation
- [q3\_3] Ofqual is too close to government
- [q3\_4] Ofqual has a negative reputation

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## Perceptions of A level qualifications

This section asks about your perceptions of A level qualifications.

**Base: All**

**[q4] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

- [q4\_1] A levels are well understood by people
- [q4\_2] A levels are a trusted qualification
- [q4\_3] A level standards are maintained year on year
- [q4\_4] A levels are good preparation for further study
- [q4\_5] A levels are good preparation for work
- [q4\_6] A levels develop a broad range of skills for students
- [q4\_7] The marking of A levels is accurate
- [q4\_8] A levels put too much stress on teachers
- [q4\_9] A levels put too much stress on students
- [q4\_11] Compared to last year I am less confident in the A level system
- [q4\_12] Compared to last year the accuracy of marking of A levels has deteriorated
- [q4\_13] There is too much change in the A level system
- [q4\_14] A levels are used routinely in my organisation as part of the judgement about a candidate's suitability for employment
- [q4\_15] A levels provide a reliable measure by which candidates' suitability for employment can be fairly compared to one another
- [q4\_16] A levels are a good indicator of a candidate's suitability for recruitment to an entry level role

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## Perceptions of A level reform

This section asks about your perceptions of A level reform. AS and A levels are currently being reformed. New AS and A levels will be taught in schools in England from September 2015. The first results for the new AS levels will be in 2016, and for the A levels in 2017. Further subjects will be introduced over the following two years.

### Base: All

[q5] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Please click on the icon below if you want to see an explanation of the term. Please click the icon again to remove the explanation)

- [q5\_1] The move to linear end of course assessment is a bad thing at A level
- [q5\_2] The disadvantages of decoupling the AS from the A level outweigh the advantages
- [q5\_3] The reduction in teacher assessment in some A level subjects is a good thing
- [q5\_4] A levels needed reform

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## Perceptions of GCSE qualifications

This section asks about your perceptions of GCSE qualifications

### Base: All

[q6] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- [q6\_1] GCSEs are well understood by people
- [q6\_2] GCSEs are a trusted qualification
- [q6\_3] GCSE standards are maintained year on year
- [q6\_4] GCSEs are good preparation for further study
- [q6\_5] GCSEs are good preparation for work
- [q6\_6] GCSEs develop a broad range of skills for students
- [q6\_7] The marking of GCSEs is accurate
- [q6\_8] GCSEs put too much stress on teachers
- [q6\_9] GCSEs put too much stress on students
- [q6\_11] Compared to last year I am less confident in the GCSE system
- [q6\_12] Compared to last year the accuracy of marking of GCSEs has deteriorated
- [q6\_13] There is too much change in the GCSE system
- [q6\_14] GCSEs are used routinely in my organisation as part of the judgement about a candidate's suitability for employment
- [q6\_15] GCSEs provide a reliable measure by which candidates' suitability for employment can be fairly compared to one another
- [q6\_16] GCSEs are a good indicator of a candidate's suitability for recruitment to an entry level role

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree

- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## Perceptions of GCSE reform

This section asks about your perceptions of GCSE reform. GCSEs are currently being reformed. New GCSEs in English language, English literature and maths will be taught in schools in England from September 2015, with the first results issued in August 2017. Further subjects will see new GCSEs introduced over the following two years.

**Base: All**

[q7] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Please click on the icon below if you want to see an explanation of the term. Please click the icon again to remove the explanation)

- [q7\_1] I understand the new 9-1 grading scale to be used in new GCSEs
- [q7\_2] < The move to linear end of course assessment is a bad thing at GCSE
- [q7\_3] The removal of tiering (where possible) is a bad thing
- [q7\_4] The reduction in teacher assessment in GCSE is a good thing
- [q7\_5] GCSEs needed reform

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## Perceptions of alternative qualifications

This section asks about your perceptions of alternative qualifications. For example, Level 1/2 Certificates (often referred to as IGCSEs) or the International Baccalaureate qualifications.

**Base: All**

[q9\_s] {multiple} Which of the following qualifications, if any, are you aware of? (Please tick all that apply)

- <10> BTECs (Level 1/2)
- <9> BTECs (Level 3)
- <12> Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2)
- <11> Cambridge Nationals (Level 3)
- <1> International A levels
- <7> Level 1/2 Certificates (more commonly known as IGCSEs)
- <2> The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme
- <8> The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme
- <3> The Pre-U
- <6 fixed > None of these

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

[q9a] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?

- [q9a\_1] International A levels are equivalent in challenge to A levels
- [q9a\_2] The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is equivalent in challenge to A levels
- [q9a\_3] The Pre-U is equivalent in challenge to A levels
- [q9a\_4] BTECs (Level 3) are equivalent in challenge to A levels
- [q9a\_5] Cambridge Nationals (Level 3) are equivalent in challenge to A levels

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9b] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

- [q9b\_1] IGCSEs are equivalent in challenge to GCSEs
- [q9b\_2] The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme is equivalent in challenge to GCSEs
- [q9b\_3] BTECs (Level 1/2) are equivalent in challenge to GCSEs
- [q9b\_4] Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2) are equivalent in challenge to GCSEs

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9c] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

- [q9c\_1] International A levels are good preparation for further study
- [q9c\_2] The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is good preparation for further study
- [q9c\_3] The Pre-U is good preparation for further study
- [q9c\_4] BTECs (Level 3) are good preparation for further study
- [q9c\_5] Cambridge Nationals (Level 3) are good preparation for further study

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9d] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

- [q9d\_1] IGCSEs are good preparation for further study
- [q9d\_2] The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme is good preparation for further study
- [q9d\_3] BTECs (Level 1/2) are good preparation for further study
- [q9d\_4] Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2) are good preparation for further study

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9e] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

- [q9e\_1] International A levels are valued as highly as A levels by Higher Education
- [q9e\_2] The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is valued as highly as A levels by Higher Education
- [q9e\_3] The Pre-U is valued as highly as A levels by Higher Education
- [q9e\_4] BTECs (Level 3) are valued as highly as A levels by Higher Education
- [q9e\_5] Cambridge Nationals (Level 3) are valued as highly as A levels by Higher Education

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9f] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

- [q9f\_1] IGCSEs are valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education
- [q9f\_2] The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme is valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education
- [q9f\_3] BTECs (Level 1/2) are valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education
- [q9f\_4] Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2) are valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9g] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

- [q9g\_1] International A levels are valued as highly as A levels by employers
- [q9g\_2] The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is valued as highly as A levels by employers
- [q9g\_3] The Pre-U is valued as highly as A levels by employers
- [q9g\_4] BTECs (Level 3) are valued as highly as A levels by employers
- [q9g\_5] Cambridge Nationals (Level 3) are valued as highly as A levels by employers

- Strongly agree
- Agree

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9h] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

-[q9h\_1] IGCSEs are valued as highly as GCSEs by employers

-[q9h\_2] The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme is valued as highly as GCSEs by employers

-[q9h\_3] BTECs (Level 1/2) are valued as highly as GCSEs by employers

-[q9h\_4] Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2) are valued as highly as GCSEs by employers

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## 38 Questionnaire for Higher Education Institutions

### Base: All

#### [s1] Which of these applies to you?

- Working full time (30 or more hours per week)
- Working part time (8-29 hours a week)
- Working part time (Less than 8 hours a week)
- Full time student
- Retired
- Unemployed
- Not working
- Other

### Base: All

#### [s2] Which of the following BEST describes the phase of education you work in?

- Early Years
- Primary/ Junior
- Secondary
- All through
- Post-16 Sixth Form college
- Post-16 FE College
- Higher Education
- Not applicable – I don't work in the education sector

### Base: All

#### [S3] In which area of the UK is the institution you work for based?

- Eastern England
- East Midlands
- London
- North-west England
- North-east England
- South-west England
- South-east England
- West Midlands
- Yorkshire and Humberside
- Scotland
- Wales
- Northern Ireland
- Channel Islands

### Base: All

#### [s4] Which ONE of the following best describes your current professional role?

- Chancellor /Vice-chancellor
- Dean of faculty
- Head of department/school
- Department/school director of studies
- Professor
- Senior lecturer, or senior teaching fellow
- Lecturer, or clinical lecturer, or teaching fellow

- Researcher
- Head of admissions
- Admissions manager / officer
- None of the above

**Base: All**

**[s5] Do you have make decisions and/or have knowledge about the process of offering applicants a place on an undergraduate course at your institution?**

- Yes
- No

**Base: All**

**[s6] At which institution do you work? If you work at more than one institution please select the institution at which you spend the most time. In these dropdown lists you can start typing a university to help find it.**

- Anglia Ruskin University
- Aston University
- Bath Spa University
- Birkbeck, University of London
- Birmingham City University
- Bishop Grosseteste University College Lincoln
- Bournemouth University
- Brunel University
- Buckinghamshire New University
- Canterbury Christ Church University
- City University, London
- Coventry University
- Cranfield University
- De Montfort University
- Edge Hill University
- Goldsmiths, University of London
- Imperial College London
- Institute of Education
- King's College London
- Kingston University
- Leeds Metropolitan University
- Liverpool Hope University
- Liverpool John Moores University
- London Metropolitan University
- London School of Economics (LSE)
- London South Bank University
- Loughborough University
- Manchester Metropolitan University
- Middlesex University
- Newman University College
- Newcastle University
- Northumbria University
- Nottingham Trent University
- Open University
- Oxford Brookes University

- Queen Margaret University
- Queen Mary, University of London
- Roehampton University
- Royal Holloway, University of London
- School of Oriental and African Studies
- Sheffield Hallam University
- Southampton Solent University
- St George's, University of London
- Staffordshire University
- Swansea Metropolitan University
- Swansea University
- Teesside University
- UHI Millennium Institute
- University Campus Suffolk
- University College London (UCL)
- University for the Creative Arts
- University of Bath
- University of Bedfordshire
- University of Birmingham
- University of Bolton
- University of Bradford
- University of Brighton
- University of Bristol
- University of Buckingham
- University of Cambridge
- University of Central Lancashire
- University of Chester
- University of Chichester
- University of Cumbria
- University of Derby
- University of Durham
- University of East Anglia
- University of East London
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Essex
- University of Exeter
- University of Glamorgan
- University of Glasgow
- University of Gloucestershire
- University of Greenwich
- University of Hertfordshire
- University of Huddersfield
- University of Hull
- University of Keele
- University of Kent
- University of Lancaster
- University of Leeds
- University of Leicester
- University of Lincoln

- University of Liverpool
- University of Manchester
- University of Northampton
- University of Nottingham
- University of Oxford
- University of Plymouth
- University of Portsmouth
- University of Reading
- University of Salford
- University of Sheffield
- University of Southampton
- University of Sunderland
- University of Surrey
- University of Sussex
- University of the Arts London
- University of the West of England, Bristol
- University of Warwick
- University of West London
- University of Westminster
- University of Winchester
- University of Wolverhampton
- University of Worcester
- University of York
- York St John University

**Base: All**

**[s7]{multiple} Which of the following subject areas do you teach?**

- Agriculture & related subjects
- Architecture
- Biological sciences
- Business & administrative studies
- Computer science
- Creative arts & design
- Education
- Engineering & technology
- Historical & philosophical studies
- Languages
- Law
- Mass communications & documentation
- Mathematical sciences
- Medicine & dentistry
- Physical sciences
- Social studies
- Subjects allied to medicine
- Veterinary science
- Combined
- None of the above – I do not teach

## Awareness of Ofqual

This section asks about whether you have heard of Ofqual and how much you understand about its role.

**Base: All**

**[q1] Which of the following statements best describes your knowledge of Ofqual?**

- Know a lot about Ofqual
- Know a fair amount about Ofqual
- Know just a little about Ofqual
- Heard of but know nothing about Ofqual
- Never heard of Ofqual

**Base: All**

**[q2] Ofqual is the independent Regulator of qualifications, examinations and assessments in England and vocational qualifications in Northern Ireland. The aim of Ofqual is to make sure that learners get the results they deserve, and that the qualifications they receive count, both now and in the future.**

**Before today, were you aware that Ofqual is the independent Regulator of qualifications, examinations and assessments in England?**

- Yes, I was aware of this
- No, I was not aware of this

## Perceptions of Ofqual

This section asks about your perceptions of Ofqual.

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of Ofqual**

**[q3] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

- [q3\_1] Ofqual communicates information well
- [q3\_2] Ofqual is a trusted organisation
- [q3\_3] Ofqual is too close to government
- [q3\_4] Ofqual has a negative reputation

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## Perceptions of A level qualifications

This section asks about your perceptions of A level qualifications.

**Base: All**

**[q4] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

- [q4\_1] A levels are well understood by people

- [q4\_2] A levels are a trusted qualification
- [q4\_3] A level standards are maintained year on year
- [q4\_4] A levels are good preparation for further study
- [q4\_5] A levels are good preparation for work
- [q4\_6] A levels develop a broad range of skills for students
- [q4\_7] The marking of A levels is accurate
- [q4\_8] A levels put too much stress on teachers
- [q4\_9] A levels put too much stress on students
- [q4\_10] The exam period for A levels is too short/congested
- [q4\_11] Compared to last year I am less confident in the A level system
- [q4\_12] Compared to last year the accuracy of marking of A levels has deteriorated
- [q4\_13] There is too much change in the A level system
- [q4\_17] A levels provide a reliable measure by which applicants can be fairly compared to one another
- [q4\_18] A levels are a good indicator of the overall ability of an applicant
- [q4\_19] A level qualifications represent the minimum standard we would expect for someone to have a place at this institution

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## Perceptions of A level reform

This section asks about your perceptions of A level reform. AS and A levels are currently being reformed. New AS and A levels will be taught in schools in England from September 2015. The first results for the new AS levels will be in 2016, and for the A levels in 2017. Further subjects will be introduced over the following two years.

### Base: All

[q5] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Please click on the icon below if you want to see an explanation of the term. Please click the icon again to remove the explanation)

- [q5\_1] The move to linear end of course assessment is a bad thing at A level
- [q5\_2] The disadvantages of decoupling the AS from the A level outweigh the advantages
- [q5\_3] The reduction in teacher assessment in some A level subjects is a good thing
- [q5\_4] A levels needed reform

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## Perceptions of GCSE qualifications

This section asks about your perceptions of GCSE qualifications

### Base: All

[q6] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- [q6\_1] GCSEs are well understood by people
- [q6\_2] GCSEs are a trusted qualification
- [q6\_3] GCSE standards are maintained year on year
- [q6\_4] GCSEs are good preparation for further study
- [q6\_5] GCSEs are good preparation for work
- [q6\_6] GCSEs develop a broad range of skills for students
- [q6\_7] The marking of GCSEs is accurate
- [q6\_8] GCSEs put too much stress on teachers
- [q6\_9] GCSEs put too much stress on students
- [q6\_10] The exam period for GCSEs is too short/congested
- [q6\_11] Compared to last year I am less confident in the GCSE system
- [q6\_12] Compared to last year the accuracy of marking of GCSEs has deteriorated
- [q6\_13] There is too much change in the GCSE system
- [q6\_17] GCSEs are used routinely in my institution in order to make a judgement about offering an applicant a place
- [q6\_18] GCSEs provide a reliable measure by which applicants can be fairly compared to one another
- [q6\_19] GCSEs are a good indicator of the overall ability of an applicant
- [q6\_20] GCSE qualifications represent the minimum standard we would expect for someone to have a place at this institution

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## Perceptions of GCSE reform

This section asks about your perceptions of GCSE reform. GCSEs are currently being reformed. New GCSEs in English language, English literature and maths will be taught in schools in England from September 2015, with the first results issued in August 2017. Further subjects will see new GCSEs introduced over the following two years.

### Base: All

[q7] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Please click on the icon below if you want to see an explanation of the term. Please click the icon again to remove the explanation)

- [q7\_1] I understand the new 9-1 grading scale to be used in new GCSEs
- [q7\_2] < The move to linear end of course assessment is a bad thing at GCSE
- [q7\_3] The removal of tiering (where possible) is a bad thing
- [q7\_4] The reduction in teacher assessment in GCSE is a good thing
- [q7\_5] GCSEs needed reform

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

### Base: All

[q8a] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

- [q8a\_1] The enquiries about results / appeals system is fair

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## Perceptions of alternative qualifications

This section asks about your perceptions of alternative qualifications. For example, Level 1/2 Certificates (often referred to as IGCSEs) or the International Baccalaureate qualifications.

### Base: All

[q9\_s] Which of the following qualifications, if any, are you aware of? (Please tick all that apply)  
<10> BTECs (Level 1/2)

- <9> BTECs (Level 3)
- <12> Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2)
- <11> Cambridge Nationals (Level 3)
- <1> International A levels
- <7> Level 1/2 Certificates (more commonly known as IGCSEs)
- <2> The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme
- <8> The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme
- <3> The Pre-U
- <6 fixed > None of these

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9a] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

- [q9a\_1] International A levels are equivalent in challenge to A levels
- [q9a\_2] The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is equivalent in challenge to A levels
- [q9a\_3] The Pre-U is equivalent in challenge to A levels
- [q9a\_4] BTECs (Level 3) are equivalent in challenge to A levels
- [q9a\_5] Cambridge Nationals (Level 3) are equivalent in challenge to A levels

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9b] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

- [q9b\_1] IGCSEs are equivalent in challenge to GCSEs
- [q9b\_2] The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme is equivalent in challenge to GCSEs
- [q9b\_3] BTECs (Level 1/2) are equivalent in challenge to GCSEs
- [q9b\_4] Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2) are equivalent in challenge to GCSEs

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9c] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

- [q9c\_1] International A levels are good preparation for further study
- [q9c\_2] The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is good preparation for further study
- [q9c\_3] The Pre-U is good preparation for further study
- [q9c\_4] BTECs (Level 3) are good preparation for further study
- [q9c\_5] Cambridge Nationals (Level 3) are good preparation for further study

- Strongly agree
- Agree

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9d] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

-[q9d\_1] IGCSEs are good preparation for further study

-[q9d\_2] The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme is good preparation for further study

-[q9d\_3] BTECs (Level 1/2) are good preparation for further study

-[q9d\_4] Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2) are good preparation for further study

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9e] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

-[q9e\_1] International A levels are valued as highly as A levels by Higher Education

-[q9e\_2] The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is valued as highly as A levels by Higher Education

-[q9e\_3] The Pre-U is valued as highly as A levels by Higher Education

-[q9e\_4] BTECs (Level 3) are valued as highly as A levels by Higher Education

-[q9e\_5] Cambridge Nationals (Level 3) are valued as highly as A levels by Higher Education

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9f] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

-[q9f\_1] IGCSEs are valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education

-[q9f\_2] The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme is valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education

-[q9f\_3] BTECs (Level 1/2) are valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education

-[q9f\_4] Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2) are valued as highly as GCSEs by Higher Education

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9g] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

- [q9g\_1] International A levels are valued as highly as A levels by employers
- [q9g\_2] The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is valued as highly as A levels by employers
- [q9g\_3] The Pre-U is valued as highly as A levels by employers
- [q9g\_4] BTECs (Level 3) are valued as highly as A levels by employers
- [q9g\_5] Cambridge Nationals (Level 3) are valued as highly as A levels by employers

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Base: Asked to those who are aware of at least 1 qualification**

**[q9h] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement(s)?**

- [q9h\_1] IGCSEs are valued as highly as GCSEs by employers
- [q9h\_2] The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme is valued as highly as GCSEs by employers
- [q9h\_3] BTECs (Level 1/2) are valued as highly as GCSEs by employers
- [q9h\_4] Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2) are valued as highly as GCSEs by employers

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

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